2017
Women, Work and Happiness: Impact of Women in the Workplace in a Digital Age Report

Foreword

Foreword

As the world moves toward the future of work, China has focused on being a global leader in the unfolding of the fourth industrial revolution (also referred to as Industry 4.0). A part of this is elevating state–owned and private domestically–owned companies to higher levels of global competitiveness as part of their "Made in China 2025"[1] plan . This ambition will require not only technical innovation but also a talented and productive workforce. With one of the highest rates of female economic participation in the world, and with Chinese women contributing close to half of the national GDP[2], China's organisations will benefit from understanding the experiences, motivations, common challenges and opportunities for action related to this pool of talent.

This report looks at the priorities and motivations in work and life of men and women and how they might change once starting a family. It quantifies the common challenges women face and the role different organisational practices play in the financial and non–financial impact that women generate within the workplace. In particular, this study examines how digital processes and technology affect the impact that women are having at work.

We seek to answer how organisations in China can make sure they are tapping into the potential of their workforce and what they can do to ensure that the challenges women face are managed so they can bring their best contributions. As many Chinese organisations rise to greater global prominence in an increasingly digital world, they will inevitability face unprecedented complexities and challenges. Understanding global and domestic trends in human capital and the future of work, as well as what role women play, can better prepare organisations to address these challenges.

1. About the report

Objectives of the report

The 2017 "Women, Work and Happiness: Impact of Women in the Workplace in a Digital Age" Report is aimed at understanding the leadership behaviours of Chinese men and women and their resulting impact in the workplace across China. This year, Lean In China in collaboration with Deloitte China, created the underlying survey and undertook data and case analysis on the responses collected. Through data collection and analysis of the responses of both men and women in the workplace, as well as in–depth workshops with top executives from different industry sectors, we hope to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the current status and future trends of the workplace in China, so as to provide recommendations for the career progression of women and to promote gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

The key objectives of the report are as follows：

1. To understand the separate motivations and priorities of men and women, and the challenges they face, both at work and in society.
2. To understand the leadership behaviours of both men and women, and the relevance of these leadership behaviours to the current economic context and future trends in the workplace in China.
3. To understand how organisational practices including leadership, digital and cultural maturity can influence the impact of women in the workplace in China.

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2. Demographic analysis

A total of 2,909 professionals across China participated in the survey, 42.83% of which were men and 57.17% of which were female.

Most of our respondents:

1. were born during 1980s (55.59%) and 1990s (24.85%).
2. are married (66.28%), or married with children (53.25%).
3. reside in first–tier cities currently (61.80%).
4. work at multinational corporations (68.86%) or private–owned enterprises (16.74%).
5. are either individual contributors (57.55%) or front–line supervisors or managers (31.08%) in their organisation.
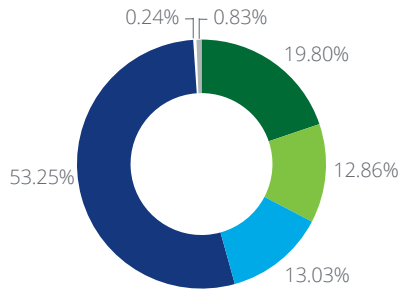6. have a monthly salary of less than 20,000 RMB (74.05%).

For the purposes of this report, we have analysed the data according to certain demographic categories such as the respondents' gender, age, relationship status, current residence, nature of employer and position at work.
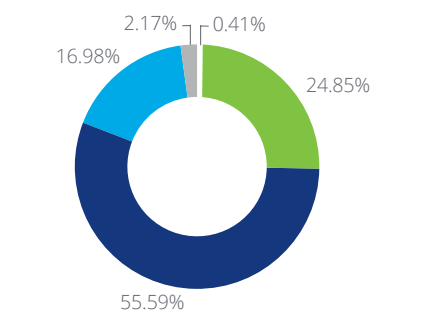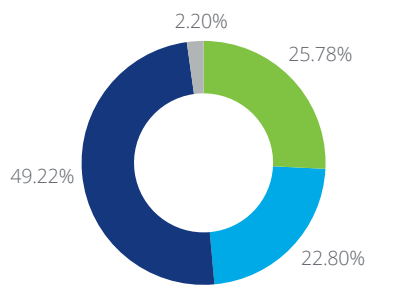
Demographics

Gender

- Women — 57.17%
- Men — 42.83%
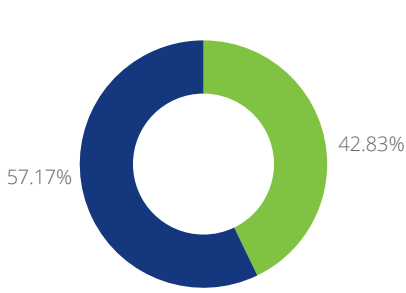
Relationship status

- Single — 19.80%
- In a relationship — 12.86%
- Married without children — 13.03%
- Married with children — 53.25%
- Divorced/widowed without children — 0.24%
- Divorced/widowed with children — 0.83%

Age

- Born during 2000's — 0.41%
- Born during 1990's — 24.85%
- Born during 1980's — 55.59%
- Born during 1970's — 16.98%
- Born pre-1960's — 2.17%

Birth Location

- First-tier cities — 25.78%
- Second-tier cities — 22.80%
- Third-tier cities — 49.22%
- Others — 2.20%
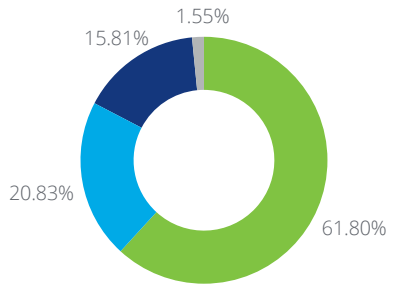
Current residence

- First-tier cities — 61.80%
- Second-tier cities — 20.83%
- Third-tier cities — 15.81%
- Others — 1.55%
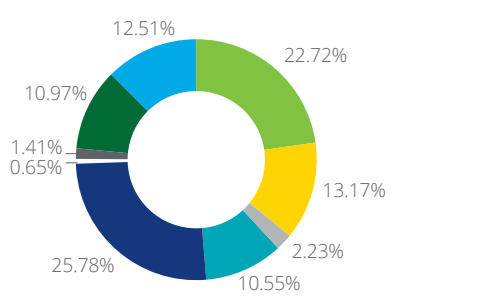
Industries

- Consumer & Retail — 22.72%
- Industrial manufacturing — 13.17%
- Energy & Resources — 2.23%
- Financial & professional services — 10.55%
- Life Science & Healthcare — 25.78%
- Public sector/Non-Govenment Organizations (NGO)/Education — 0.65%
- Real Estate — 1.41%
- Technology, Media & Telecommunications — 10.97%
- Others — 12.51%
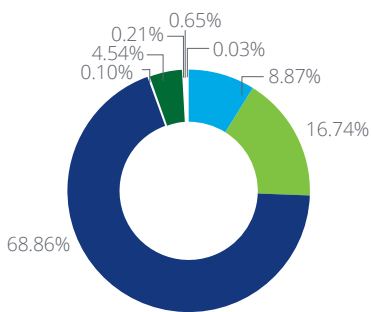
Nature of employer

- State-Owned Enterprise — 16.74%
- Private-Owned Enterprise — 8.87%
- Multinational Corporation — 68.86%
- Chinese government — 0.03%
- Joint venture — 0.65%
- Chinese non-profit — 0.21%
- Foreign non-profit — 0.10%
- Others — 4.54%
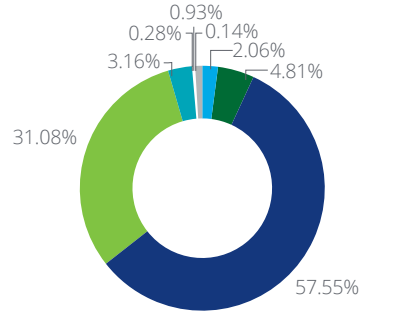
Position at work

- Intern — 2.06%
- Temporary worker, contractor — 4.81%
- Individual contributor — 57.55%
- Front-line supervisor/ manager — 31.08%
- VP or director — 3.16%
- C-suite — 0.14%
- Board member — 0.28%
- Others — 0.93%
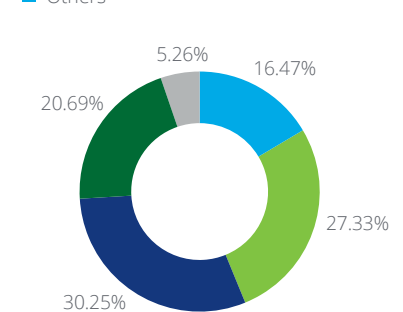
Salary range(RMB)

- Less than 5,000 — 16.47%
- 5,000-9,999 — 27.33%
- 10,000-19,999 — 30.25%
- 20,000-49,999 — 20.69%
- 50,000 and above — 5.26%

3. Executive summary

Diversity and inclusiveness in organisations are no longer just an issue of compliance or ethics, but key to productivity growth in the digital age. The workforce of the future needs to be able to leverage (1) technological innovation and digital tools and (2) a new digital mind–set in order to link and unlock the untapped potential not yet seen in this current industrial revolution. Understanding the motivations and challenges faced by the current workforce in both life and work are key to aligning people, process and technology. This report showcases the following findings:

1. The Importance of Family
Men value family as much as women. Research shows that 61.82% of women and 57.46% of men consider family and career as equally important, while a slightly higher percentage of men (33.95%) than women (30.67%) think that family is more important than career. This effect is further magnified after having children.

2. The Challenge of Work–Life Balance
Maintaining work life balance is one of the top challenges cited by men highlighting this is not only a priority for women. As women become more senior, the challenge of balancing work and life becomes more prevalent with them more likely to cite this than men of the same seniority. Given the central role that family plays in life satisfaction, organisations may need to review remote and flexible working polices to support family life for both men and women.

3. Low Prevalence of Gender Discrimination
Discrimination based on gender in the workplace is not viewed as a major challenge by the large majority of both genders. However, women were half as likely as men to think that there were equal opportunities for both men and women in the workplace. The main reasons cited was differentials in compensation and career disruption due to maternity or paternity.

4. Leadership Ambitions
Though both men and women stated they wanted to move into leadership roles at near equal levels (88% men vs. 78% women), men were 50% more likely than women to want to rise to the most senior leadership position in their organisation. The most common reason for both genders not wanting the most senior leadership role in an organisation is because of the pressure of the job.

5. External Time Commitments
Time spent with children was the largest time commitment for respondents with women spending more time than men on this. Interestingly, time spent with children increased for women with children (compared to women in general), but not for men with children (compared to men in general).

6. Concerns on having a Second Child
Men were almost twice as likely as women to cite the issue of economic pressure when considering having a second child. Women with children are almost twice as likely as men with children to cite work life balance as a challenge to having a second child. This may reflect the perceived split in gender roles–men may feel more pressure to be the breadwinner while women feel more pressure to be responsible for the household.

7. Leadership Capabilities
Men rate themselves higher in all leadership capabilities than women reflecting what has been referred to before as a "confidence gap"[3]. Interestingly, men and women have the same top three self–perceived capabilities: Collaboration, Execution and Direction (providing a clear direction). Men and women rank themselves both lowest in Building Talent (building talent and capabilities in others) which is key for the longer–term development of an organisation.

8. Individual Qualities
In term of personal factors, women rank themselves higher in Emotional Intelligence, Breadth of Perspective and Drive, while men rank themselves higher in Experimenting and Self–Belief. Men and women also both rank themselves lowest in terms of Challenging others and Risk Taking which are both key for having an entrepreneurial culture in organisations. Although organizations in China is currently positioned to perform well in the current climate, this entrepreneurial gap can be an issue in the future.

9. Organisational Context in a digital age
An organisational culture that promotes risk taking and inclusion is most related to increasing non–financial and financial impact for both men and women in the workplace. Women are slightly more likely than men to have greater financial impact when organisations have a culture of risk–taking and inclusion. In addition, having a defined leadership model, clearly defined expectations of leadership positions and openness with employees regarding their leadership potential will empower women to create greater financial impact in the workplace. At the same time, the greater the digital maturity of an organisation, the more likely that women will invest extra time and effort into their organisation.

The final section of the report sets out a call to action and various suggestions as how organisations may create a more conducive workplace of the future to motivate women and men to bring their best contributions to work, and in particular highlighting the role that technology can play. Bringing in policies such as mentoring, flexible working, and working with leaders to develop their inclusive leadership behaviours are among the suggestions.
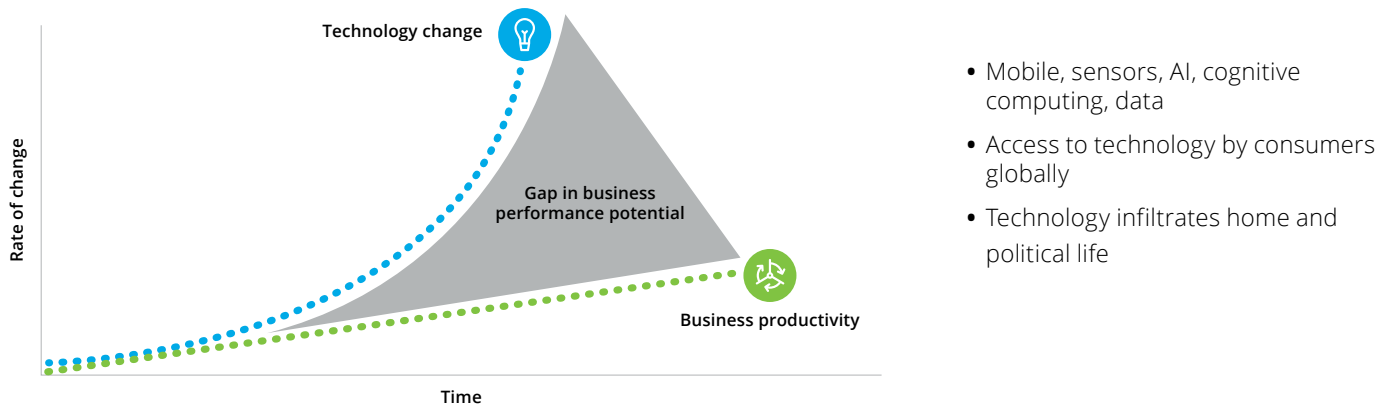
4. Setting the Background: The Future of Work[4]

The Future of Work in a Digital age

Driven by the paradigm–shifting forces such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, and cognitive technologies, the nature of work is changing dramatically creating what many call the "augmented workforce". As these trends accelerate, organisations must reconsider and redesign how they lead, organise, motivate and manage their workforce. New rules are needed that favour the flexibility and support required for individuals to make the most of all advantages technology can bring.

While technology is advancing at an unprecedented rate, data shows that business productivity is not. Research[5] indicates an ever–increasing gap between technological sophistication and individual output.

The future of work–what appears to be happening?

- Mobile, sensors, AI, cognitive computing, data
- Access to technology by consumers globally
- Technology infiltrates home and political life

Examining the bigger picture reveals that individuals are relatively quick at adopting new technologies but organisations are slow to adapt organisational practices which were developed for the previous industrial age, such as structure, job design, and performance management that cannot keep pace with digital changes.

The future of work–what is really happening?
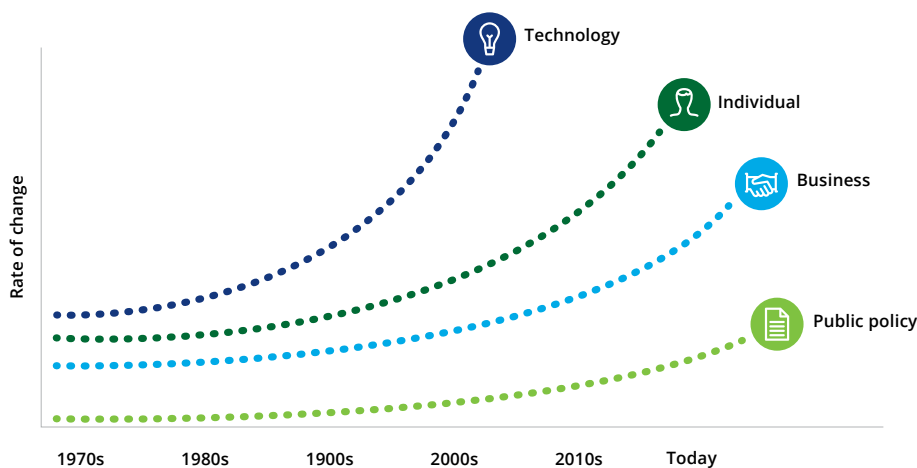
So what do organisations need to do to close this gap? Being a digital organisation will require a mind–set shift which values and encourages being agile, collaborative, challenging others and taking risks. As we will discuss further in this report, in order to close the gap and catch up with the changes, organisations should not only focus on re–training their workforce, but also reconsidering leadership, structures, diversity, technology and the overall employee experience holistically.

Our findings identify advantages and future opportunities in the most prevalent leadership capabilities and personal attributes of men and women in China's workplace. It also identifies the positive impact of organisational culture and digital practices currently used by companies in China. Finally, it offers a call to action which organisations can implement to increase the speed in which they close the productivity gap–and in particular, how to enhance the impact of women in the workplace.

Six Human Capital Trends and China

Six Human Capital

The context for nearly every organisation's human resource practices has shifted. While digital disruptions are advancing at an unprecedented rate, employees and organisation are more "overwhelmed" than ever. How businesses organise, manage, develop and align work, workforce and workplace in the 21st century can mean the difference between survival and irrelevance. We focus on six global Human Capital Trends which are particularly relevant to Chinese organisations which they can leverage to expand globally in a digital era.

1. Structuring as an Organisation of for the Future
As organisations become more digital they will need to keep pace with change and face a constant pressure to adapt. Agility and flexibility play crucial roles in the organisation of the future requiring a shift away from hierarchical organisational structures towards a team–centric model that is empowered to make decisions. This is further supported by greater collaboration and open knowledge–sharing. Acknowledging and encouraging this type of self–organizing structure places new demands on leaders' skills requiring more curiosity, inclusion, and persuasion.[6] It also requires a culture of psychological safety where a diversity of ideas can be shared and risk–taking and innovation are common place.

2. Careers and Lifelong On–Demand Learning
Shifting demographics are making the prospect of 70–year careers a possibility. This, along with the decreasing half–life of skill sets creates a context for continuous learning. This is particularly relevant in China, where some 77% of jobs are at risk due to automation. Employees nowadays rate training and development the most coveted job benefit and are pushing for ongoing skills development. Yet Learning and Development (L&D) departments are struggling to keep up with employee demands. The average employee has limited time to spend, dedicating less than one hour a week to learning, prompting many CEOs to say L&D is "wildly out of sync" with how people learn. To keep pace with the digital changes and employees' development needs, companies must redesign their L&D programs to enable an on demand experience and allow employees to build skills easily, quickly and on their own terms.

3. Cognitive Recruitment in Talent Acquisition
Attracting and acquiring the best talent has always been a focus for organisations. A company' s employment value proposition must be both visible and attractive in a digital and transparent world as candidates search and compare for the best employers. But being an attractive employer is not enough–organisations must coordinate across functions and channels to source the best talent and look to flexible talent sources including contingent, freelance and part–time talent. In the digital era, repetitive and time–consuming recruitment tasks, such as background screening, will be replaced by AI and other technologies. Recruiters will be freed up to focus more on building relationships and enabling a more positive candidate experience through social media sourcing, video interviews and more advanced assessment techniques.

4. Employee Experience: Culture, Engagement and Beyond
In a digital era, employees value a productive, engaging and enjoyable work experience more than salary alone. Many companies are starting to update their strategy for engaging and motivating their employees by measuring employee experience on a more frequent basis. Leading organisations are now going beyond engagement and culture to focus on providing an integrated employee experience. This broader focus includes other contributors to employee satisfaction and work life such as wellness, purpose, and non–financial rewards. Some HR departments are also leveraging digital platforms such as immediate feedbacks tools, wellness apps and employee self–service portals to better understand, monitor and improve the whole employee experience.

5. Performance Management: Play a Winning Hand
As the workplace and workforce shift to new realities, the way organisations measure, evaluate and recognize employee

performance is also changing. Continuous performance management practices are being adopted by more organisations involving more frequent, team–centric, multi–directional and data–driven measures from a range of sources. Moving away from manager–centric, hierarchical and less methodical approaches, the focus is more on coaching and providing feedback to improve performance continuously rather than after an annual review. Even though this has demonstrated overwhelmingly positive outcomes in the organisations that implement them, the majority of organisations do not have advanced systems in place to support this.

6. Leadership Disrupted: Pushing the Boundaries

The transition to being a digital organisation requires a corresponding shift in leadership. High–performing leaders today need different skills and expertise than in generations past and most organisations recognize leadership development as an important or a very important priority for the organisation. Leaders in the digital age must understand how to build and lead dispersed and highly matrixed teams (teams which report to multiple reporting lines); keep people connected and engaged; drive a culture of innovation, risk taking and continuous learning; and keep up with new trends in technology. While most companies have recognized the fact that they need a new model for leadership in a digital age, they also must focus on the rise of millennials, the role of diversity within the workforce and an increasingly global perspective.

5. Life and Work Priorities

Over the past decade Chinese companies have performed exceedingly well, having experienced rapid corporate income growth, rising profitability, and developments in technology and expertise. This can be seen in world–beating productivity gains, an expanding labour force, and rising inflows of foreign direct investment. However, as China enters a new stage in its development characterised by slowing revenue growth, rising wage and commodity costs and a move from investment to consumption led growth, it must focus on lifting productivity. For the economy as a whole, more productivity growth will come from improvements at firm level. Companies in China must therefore view productivity as a strategic imperative and shift from thinking about workers as labour to developing people as talent.

In order for companies in China to sustain rapid growth and to build strong and sustainable cultures, greater attention should be paid to the various factors which can motivate employees to be more satisfied and hence more productive in their work and lives in turn increasing overall labour productivity. We identified six areas of importance for understanding the workforce.

The importance of Family vs Career

Importance of family vs. career

	Women	Men
Family = Career	61.82%	57.46%
Family > Career	30.67%	33.95%
Family < Career	5.89%	7.39%
Family < Career (Women married with children / Men married with children)	2.13%	4.38%
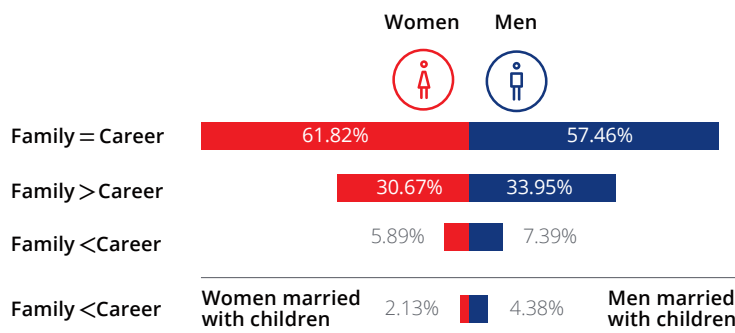
Family plays a central role in China with women often taking a major role in managing them In addition,[7] China's female labour force participation stands at 63.30% which is higher than the average of OECD (57%) and Asia Pacific countries (62%). At 41%, China has the highest share of women's contribution to GDP among all regions in the world[8]. The majority of mothers also work in China–72% of mothers between 25 and 34 years of age with children under the age of six were employed in 2010[9].

So how do women view the importance of family and career? When survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of family and career, 61.82% of women and 57.46% of men rated family and career as equally important. A slightly higher percentage of men (33.95%) than women (30.67%) rated family as more important than career. Conversely, 5.89% of women in general and 7.39% of men in general rated career was more important than family. However once married with children, women were three times less likely (2.13%) and men were two times less likely (4.38%) to say that career was more important than family. Therefore, employers looking to retain talent in China should increasingly reflect on what practices they have to support workers with families.

Satisfaction with Work and Life

1. Overall

Overall satisfaction of life experience

		Women	Men			
Rank					**Rank**	
Top	1	Family commitments	4.19	4.37	1	Family commitments	Top
	2	Marriage or romantic relationship	3.83	4.16	2	Marriage or romantic relationship
	3	Personal health and wellness	3.77	3.88	3	Hobbies

Overall satisfaction of work experience

		Women	Men			
Rank					**Rank**	
Top	Organization's social impact	3.93	3.94	Organization's social impact	Top
	Working with colleagues whom I can learn from	3.83	3.83	Working with colleagues whom I can learn from
	Having a role model at work	3.70	3.74	Having a role model at work
Bottom	Money/ compensation package	3.11	3.18	Power and Influence	Bottom

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with work and life on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being most dissatisfied and 5 being most satisfied. With regards to life outside of work, survey respondents in general were most satisfied with their family commitments, their marriage or romantic relationships, followed by their health. Across all demographic categories of gender, age, relationship status, current residence, nature of employer and position at work, family commitments ranked highest in terms of satisfaction levels. However, when looking at individual genders, women in general were less satisfied with their marriage and romantic relationships (3.83) than men in general (4.16). In terms of work, men and women were both most satisfied with the social impact of the organizations they worked for (3.94; 3.93), followed by working with colleagues they could learn from (3.83; 3.83) and then having a role model at work (3.74; 3.70). Women were least satisfied with money/compensation and men were least satisfied with power and influence.

2. Married with children

Satisfaction of life experience

		Women with children	Men with children			
Rank					**Rank**	
Top	1	Family commitments	4.33	4.51	1	Family commitments	Top
	2	Marriage or romantic relationship	4.14	4.37	2	Marriage or romantic relationship
	3	Personal health and wellness	3.85	3.95	3	Personal health and wellness

Satisfaction of work experience

	Women with children	Men with children			
Rank				**Rank**	
Top	Organization's social impact	3.90	3.95	Organization's social impact	Top
	Working with colleagues whom I can learn from	3.83	3.82	Working with colleagues whom I can learn from
	Having a role model at work	3.70	3.76	Having a role model at work
Bottom	Opportunities for career advancement	3.07	3.17	Opportunities for career advancement	Bottom

Once married with children, both men and women stated an increase in their levels of satisfaction with their marriage and romantic relationships, though women noted a larger increase (8%) than men (5%). Women married with children were least satisfied with their opportunities for career advancement moving from the lowest ranked compared to third lowest for women in general.

3. Seniority

Overall satisfaction of life and work experience

	Senior women	Senior men	
排位			排位
Top			Top
Family commitments	4.30	4.45	Family commitments
Marriage or romantic relationship	4.00	4.32	Marriage or romantic relationship
Academic pursuits	4.00	3.95	Academic pursuits
Mentorship/coaching	3.33	3.50	Training and development opportunities
Opportunities for career advancement	3.31	3.42	Mentorship/coaching
Work-life balance (Bottom)	3.26	3.24	Work-life balance (Bottom)

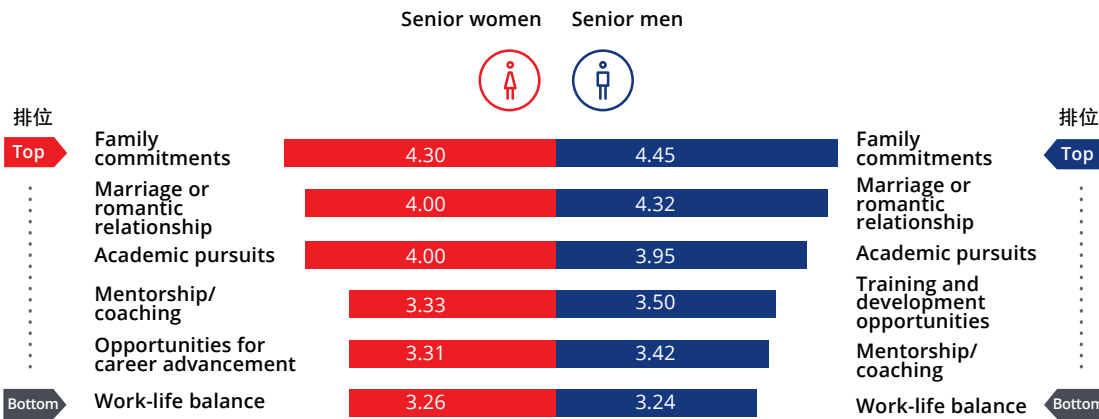Respondents of higher seniority (VP level and above) also stated a higher level of satisfaction with their family commitments and marriage and romantic relationships than all respondents in general. However, senior men cited a higher level of satisfaction with their marriages or romantic relationships (4.32) than senior women (4.00). This goes against the conventional assumption that rising to a senior position at work comes at the expense of family but also suggests that women in general are showing higher levels of dissatisfaction with their marriages and romantic relationships.

4. Nature of employer

Overall satisfaction of women in life and work experience

Rank	State-owned enterprise	Private-owned enterprise	Multinational corporation
19	3.21 — Flexibility	3.17 — Opportunities for career advancement /Mentorship/coaching	3.16 — Power and influence
20	3.12 — Opportunities for career	3.08 — Power and influence	3.14 — Money/compensation package
21 (Bottom)	3.10 — Money/compensation package	3.06 — Money/compensation package	3.12 — Opportunities for career advancement
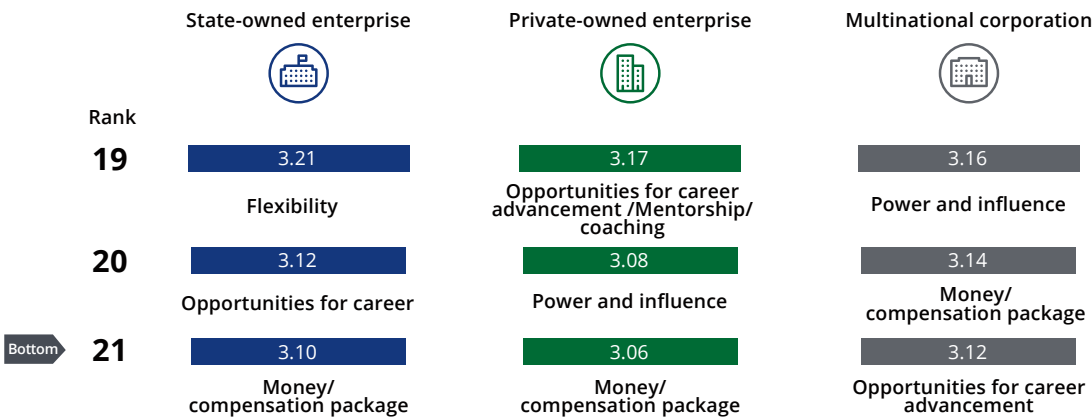
In general, women were most least satisfied with money/compensation, opportunities of career advancement and power and influence. While women at foreign owned companies appear to be more satisfied with money (3.14), while women at foreign (3.45) and state–owned companies (3.31) appear to be more satisfied with work life balance and women at privately owned companies appear to be more satisfied with opportunities for career advancement (3.17) in terms of ranking.

5. Age

Overall satisfaction of women in life and work experience

	Born during 1970's	Born during 1980's	Born during 1990's
Rank			
19	Mentorship/Coaching — 3.24	Power and influence — 3.13	Seniority — 3.11
20	Training and development opportunities — 3.23	Money/compensation package — 3.11	Power and influence — 3.00
Bottom 21	Opportunities for career advancement — 3.08	Opportunities for career advancement — 3.07	Money/compensation package — 2.96
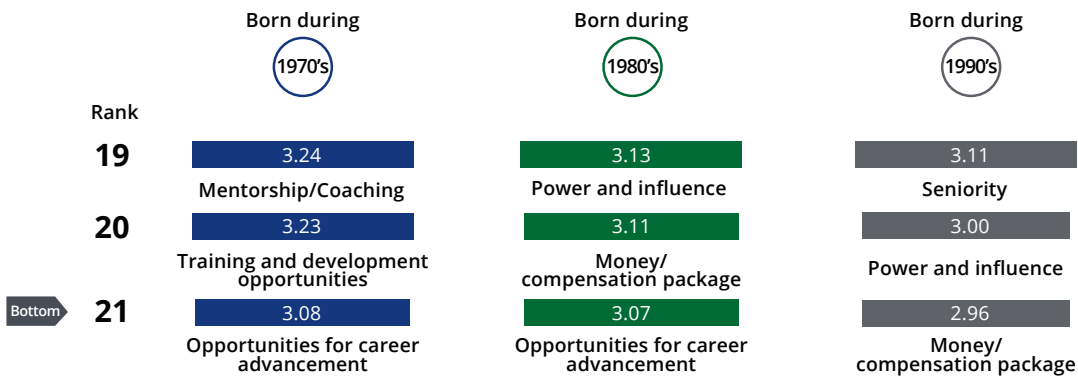
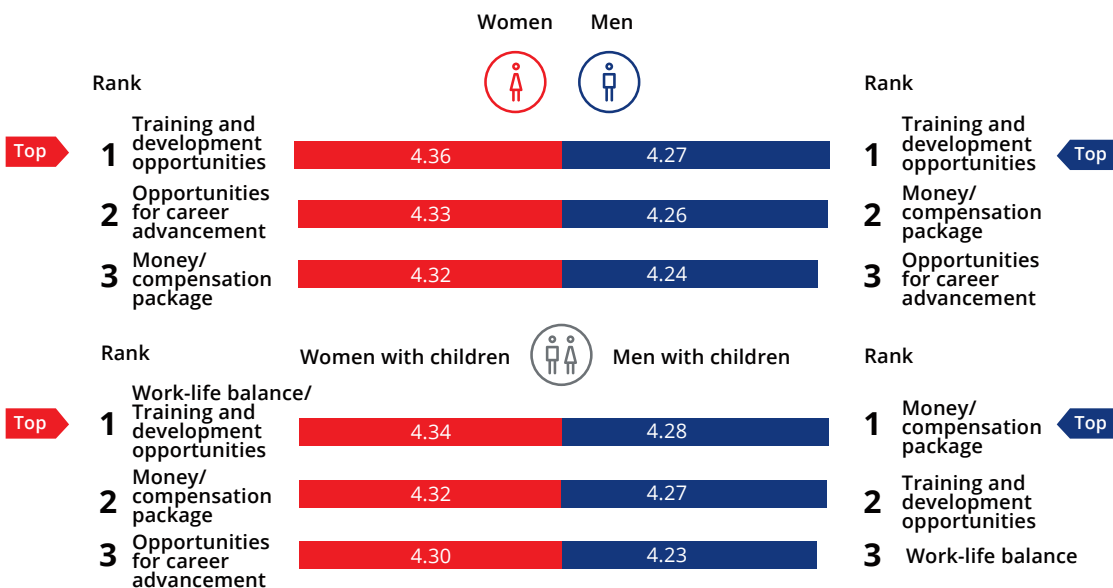In general, women born in the 90s were most dissatisfied with money/compensation, power and influence, seniority and social status. Women born in the 80s were most dissatisfied with money/compensation and opportunities for career advancement. Women born in the 70s were most dissatisfied with opportunities for career advancement, training and mentorship. The responses from women born in the 90s are reflective of the millennial mind–set which is accompanied by a need of being valued and being developed as leaders and an expectation of rapid career growth[10]. These concerns are something that organisations should increasingly take into account given that 75% of the workforce in China will be made up of millennials by 2025[11].
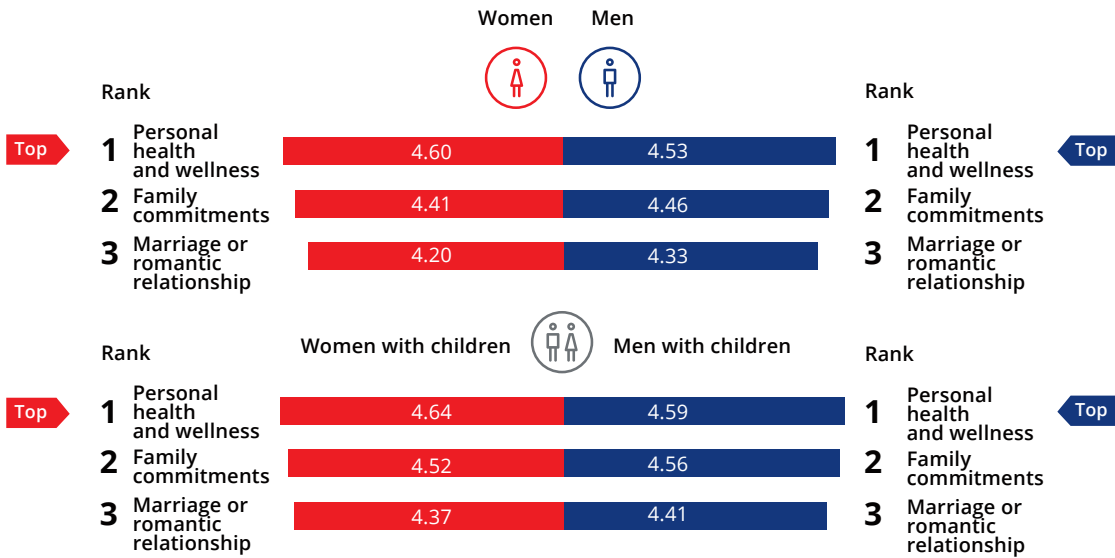
Motivations for Work and Life

What motivates you in work?

Rank		Women	Men		Rank
Top 1	Training and development opportunities	4.36	4.27	Training and development opportunities	**Top 1**
2	Opportunities for career advancement	4.33	4.26	Money/compensation package	**2**
3	Money/compensation package	4.32	4.24	Opportunities for career advancement	**3**

Rank	Women with children		Men with children		Rank
Top 1	Work-life balance/Training and development opportunities	4.34	4.28	Money/compensation package	**Top 1**
2	Money/compensation package	4.32	4.27	Training and development opportunities	**2**
3	Opportunities for career advancement	4.30	4.23	Work-life balance	**3**

In work, both men and women rated training and development opportunities, promotion and advancement opportunities and money/compensation as their top motivating factors. As mentioned in our Human Capital Trends above, organisations should pay more attention to the importance of ongoing skills development opportunities for their employees as employees nowadays rate training and development as the most coveted job benefit. This is particularly relevant in China given the ongoing war for talent in the marketplace and recruitment and retention remaining huge challenges for Chinese companies, as top performers are often tempted by other companies with large salary increases leading to high turnover rates. According to research[12] only 20% of people stay with a company for five years or more in China, which makes China distinct from many other countries across Asia.

After having children, women cite both work life balance (4.34) and training and development opportunities (4.34) as the most important motivating factor, while men cite money as the most important (4.28). This, to some extent, could suggest the difference in terms of assumed gender roles historically with men perceiving their primary responsibilities to be the economic breadwinner while women feel the need to undertake more responsibilities at home[13]. This is again reflected in below in terms of time spent on different roles and varying concerns of men and women on having a second child.

What motivates you in life?

Women   Men

Rank		Women	Men	Rank		
Top	**1** Personal health and wellness	4.60	4.53	**1** Personal health and wellness	Top	
	2 Family commitments	4.41	4.46	**2** Family commitments		
	3 Marriage or romantic relationship	4.20	4.33	**3** Marriage or romantic relationship		

Women with children   Men with children

| Rank		Women with children	Men with children	Rank		
Top	**1** Personal health and wellness	4.64	4.59	**1** Personal health and wellness	Top	
	2 Family commitments	4.52	4.56	**2** Family commitments		
	3 Marriage or romantic relationship	4.37	4.41	**3** Marriage or romantic relationship		

In life, both men and women rated health, family and marriage as their top motivating factors. This mirrors the response of men and women in top three ranked of areas of their life they were most satisfied–except that they were less satisfied with health than family and marriage.

Time spent on personal life

Organisations should also consider how their employees invest their time outside the workplace. Understanding this and making small steps to ensure these needs are supported when possible can help increase employee loyalty and retention.

Time spent outside of work
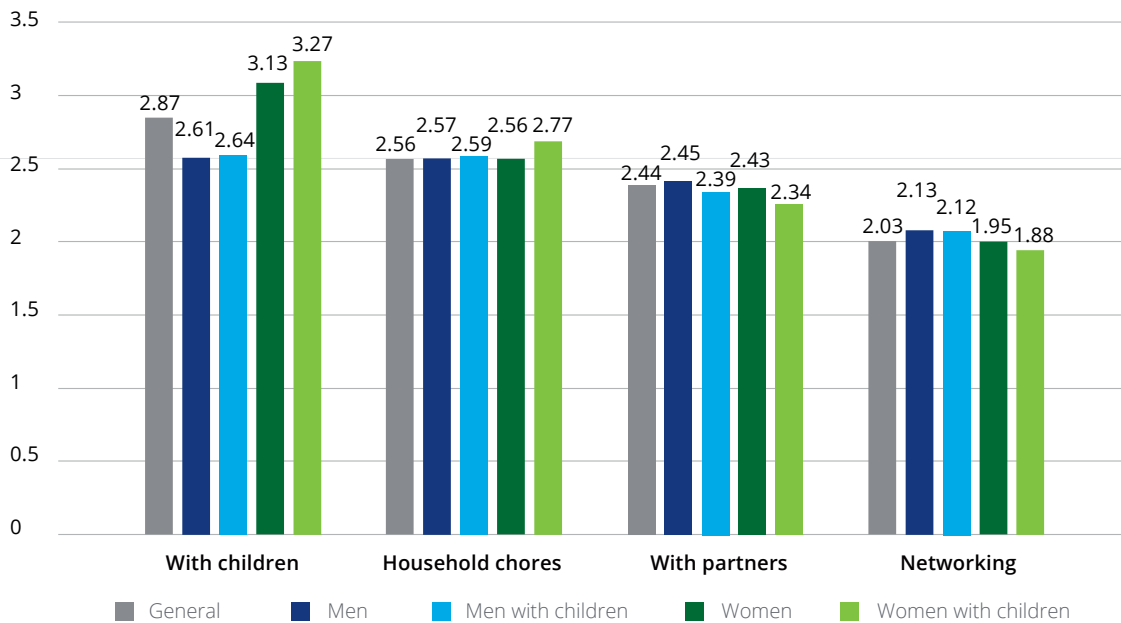
Respondents were asked to rate the amount of time they spent on various activities outside of work on a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning less than once a week and 5 meaning five times or more a week. In general, survey respondents spent the most time with their children (2.87), performing household responsibilities (2.56) and with their partners (2.44).

Women in general spent a significantly higher amount of time (3.13) with their children than men in general (2.61), with roughly the same amount of time on household chores. Men in general spent more time networking than women in general. Women with children spent more time with their children and performing household responsibilities (compared to women in general), Despite the fact that men in general have stated that they value their family life as much as women do, men with children spent almost the same amount of time on children and household responsibilities (compared to men in general).

Time spent with children
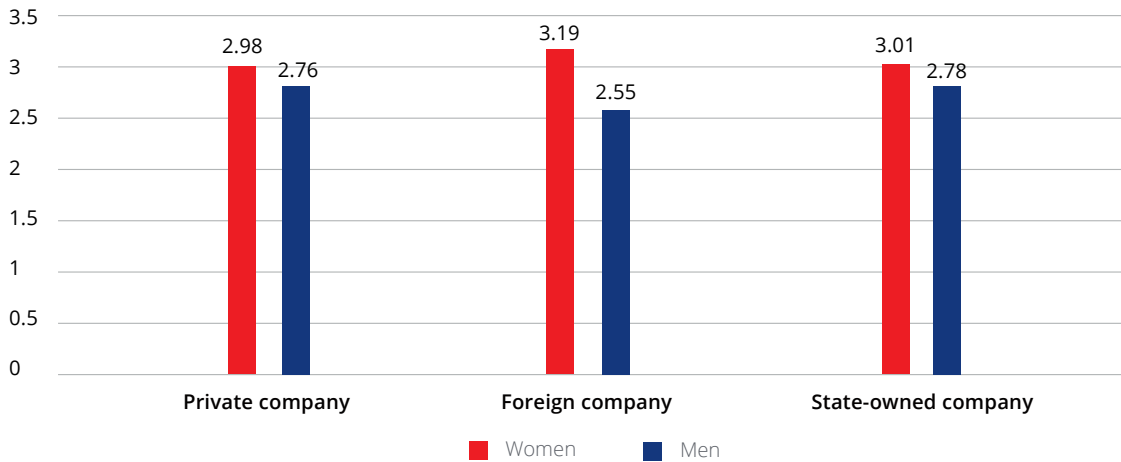
Men and women both spent less time spent with their partners after they had children. In privately owned companies, there is the lowest difference in time spent by men and women with their children, but in foreign owned companies, women spent a significantly higher amount of time than men with their children.

Concerns on having a second child

The discussion on the future of work comes amid a landmark change in China's population demographics with China's two child policy in October 2015. The birth rate increased by 7.90% in 2016, with 45% of babies born to families which already had one child. However, as set out in a State Council blueprint outlining population policies up to 2030, China's overall fertility rate still remains below replacement level[14] as it increasingly faces serious challenges including a shrinking labour force and rapidly aging population–which in turn leads to a smaller pool of talent for the future. The top concerns expressed by general respondents in having a second child are economic pressure, lack of work life balance and pressure on family relationships. Economic pressure was cited as the top reason across all demographic categories except for respondents in senior management.

Concerns about having a second child
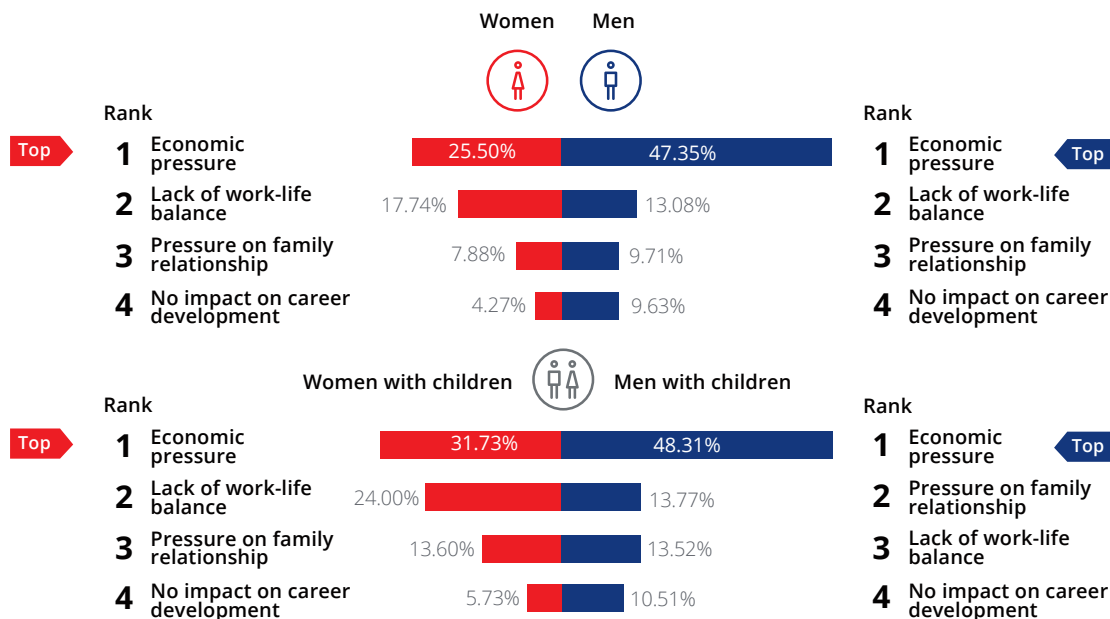
Men (47.35%) are almost twice as likely as women (25.50%) to cite economic pressure for not wanting to have a second child. This might be reflective that men feel greater responsibility for bearing the financial burden of a household[15]. Women with children (13.60%) are twice as likely (than women in general: 7.88%) and men with children (13.77%) are 1.5 times as likely (than men in general: 9.71%) to cite pressure from family relationships. Only 4.27% of women say that having a second child will have no impact on their careers compared to 9.63% of men. Women with children (24%) are almost twice as likely to cite lack of work life balance as a concern than men with children (13.52%).

Leadership aspirations

Leadership aspirations

Women   Men

	Women	Men
Desire for promotion to a managerial or more senior managerial position	78.17%	88.20%
Desire to become the top leader of the organization	42.21%	64.77%
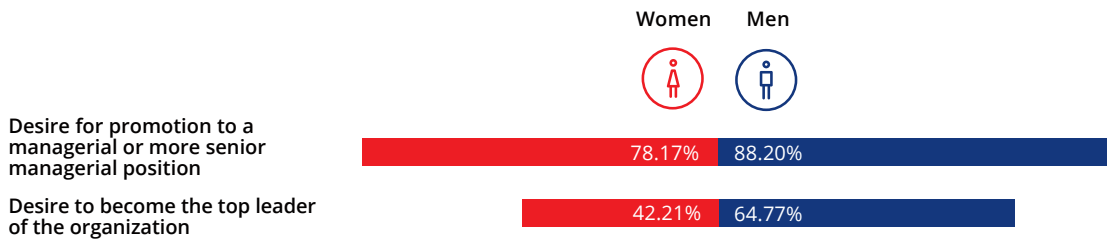
When asked about their leadership aspirations, 78.17% of women and 88.20% of men desire to be promoted to a managerial level or to a more senior managerial position. However, men are 1.5 times more likely to aspire to be the top leader in their organisation with only 42.21% of women aspiring to be the top leader in their organisation, compared to 64.77% of men. This shows a significant leadership ambition difference. The top reason (by a large margin) cited by both men and women is that they feel that the top job comes with too much pressure.

6. Challenges Faced in a Digital Age

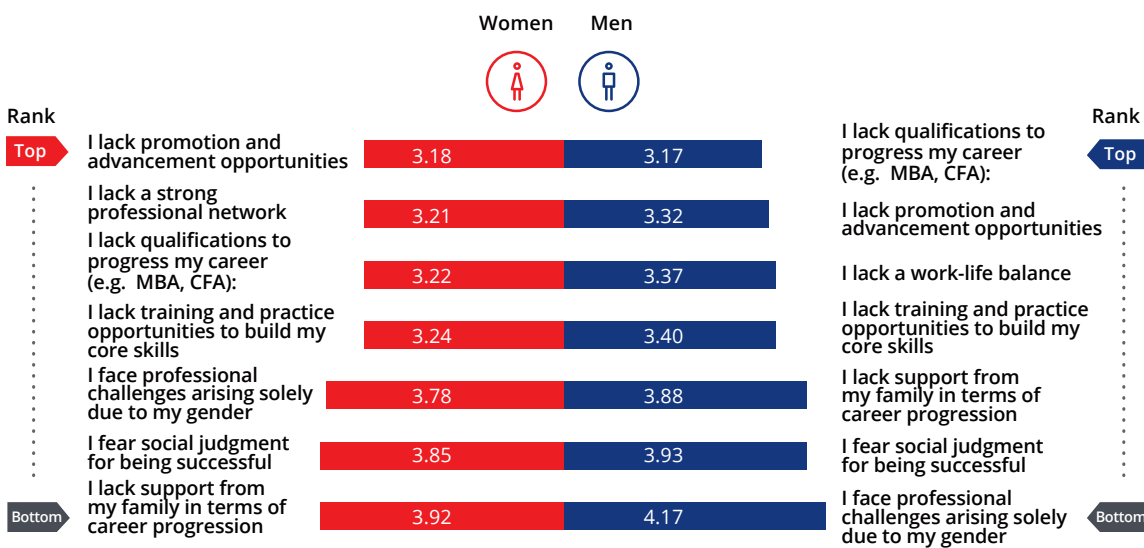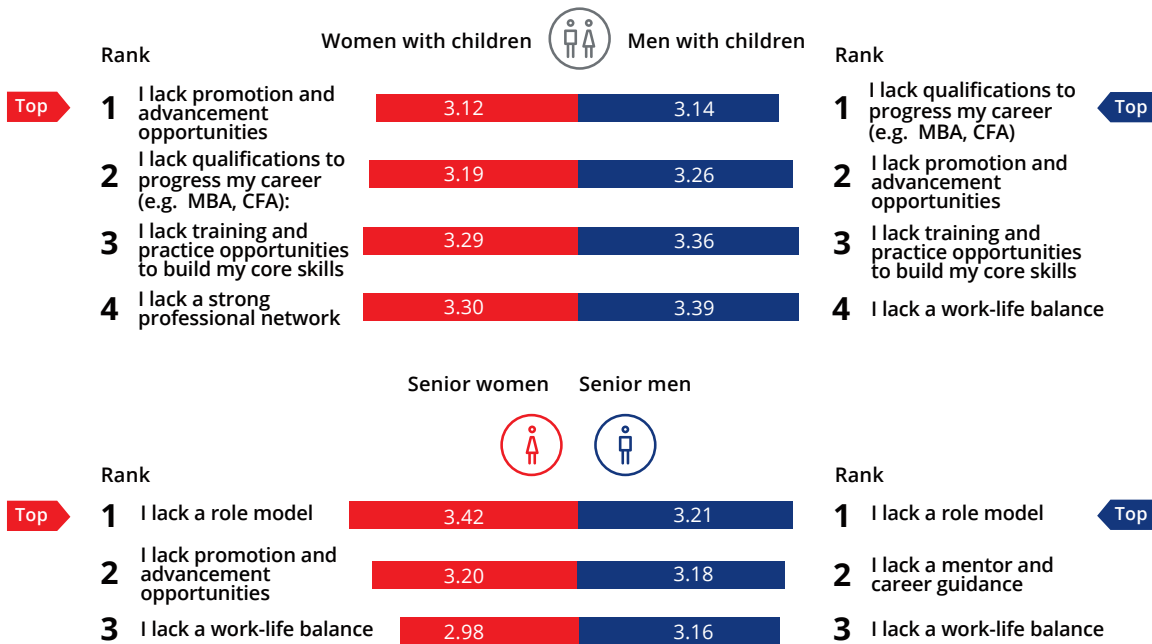## Professional challenges in general

Professional challenges in general

Women   Men

Rank		Women	Men		Rank
Top	I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.18	3.17	I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA):	Top
	I lack a strong professional network	3.21	3.32	I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	
	I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA):	3.22	3.37	I lack a work-life balance	
	I lack training and practice opportunities to build my core skills	3.24	3.40	I lack training and practice opportunities to build my core skills	
	I face professional challenges arising solely due to my gender	3.78	3.88	I lack support from my family in terms of career progression	
	I fear social judgment for being successful	3.85	3.93	I fear social judgment for being successful	
Bottom	I lack support from my family in terms of career progression	3.92	4.17	I face professional challenges arising solely due to my gender	Bottom

Respondents were asked to rate the frequency of the professional challenges they faced on a scale of 1–5 with 1 meaning always and 5 meaning never. For women in general, the lack of promotion and advancement opportunities was ranked top, while the lack of networks was their second top ranked challenge and the lack of qualifications was ranked third. For men in general, the lack of qualifications was ranked top, followed by the lack of promotion and advancement opportunities and then the lack of work–life balance (while interestingly this was only the fifth ranked challenge for women).This goes against the traditional assumption that work–life balance is seen only as a priority for women. In the sections below, we set out how increasing digitalization can help to address the challenge of work–life balance.
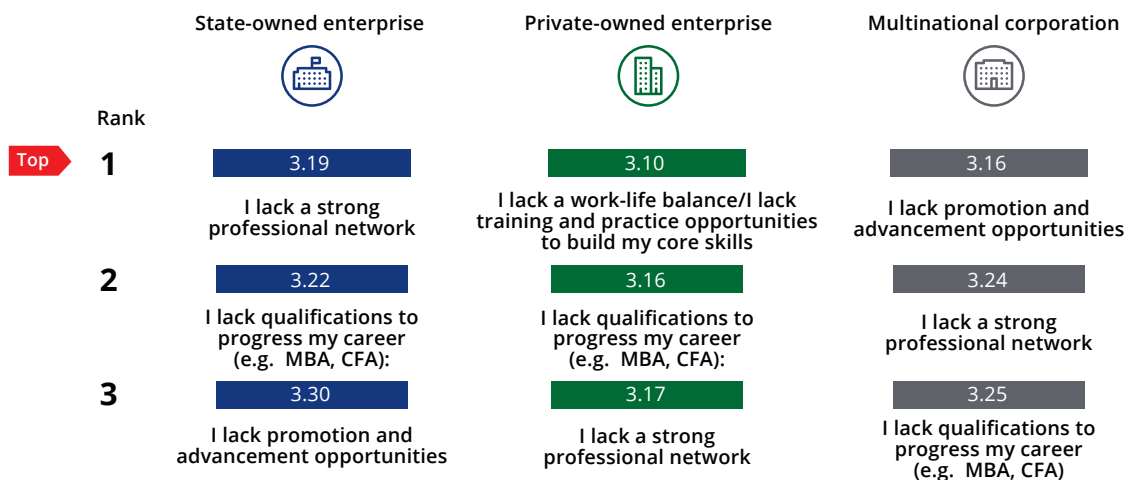
Professional challenges in general

Rank		Women with children	Men with children		Rank
Top 1	I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.12	3.14	I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)	1 **Top**
2	I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA):	3.19	3.26	I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	2
3	I lack training and practice opportunities to build my core skills	3.29	3.36	I lack training and practice opportunities to build my core skills	3
4	I lack a strong professional network	3.30	3.39	I lack a work-life balance	4

Rank		Senior women	Senior men		Rank
Top 1	I lack a role model	3.42	3.21	I lack a role model	1 **Top**
2	I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.20	3.18	I lack a mentor and career guidance	2
3	I lack a work-life balance	2.98	3.16	I lack a work-life balance	3

When married with children, the lack of promotion and advancement opportunities remained the top ranked challenge for women. This could be reflective of "maternal bias" which relates to motherhood triggering assumptions that women are less competent and less committed to their careers. As a result, they are held to higher standards and presented with fewer opportunities[16]. The implications for organisations as a result of such subconscious maternal biases are that managers, with the best of intentions for working mothers, may be actually reinforcing certain gender roles by eliminating responsibilities or projects which require longer work hours or travel. Research has shown that an increasing percentage of the wage differences between men and women is attributable to motherhood[17].

In general, women stated that challenges arising solely due to gender reasons was their third lowest ranked challenge. Encouragingly, this appears to be a low ranked challenge for women (3.78) across state, privately or foreign owned companies. Even though this challenge was overall ranked low for women, we note there was a somewhat large difference in terms of scoring (8%) between them and men in general (for whom this was the lowest ranked challenge) with women seeing this as a challenge more than men.

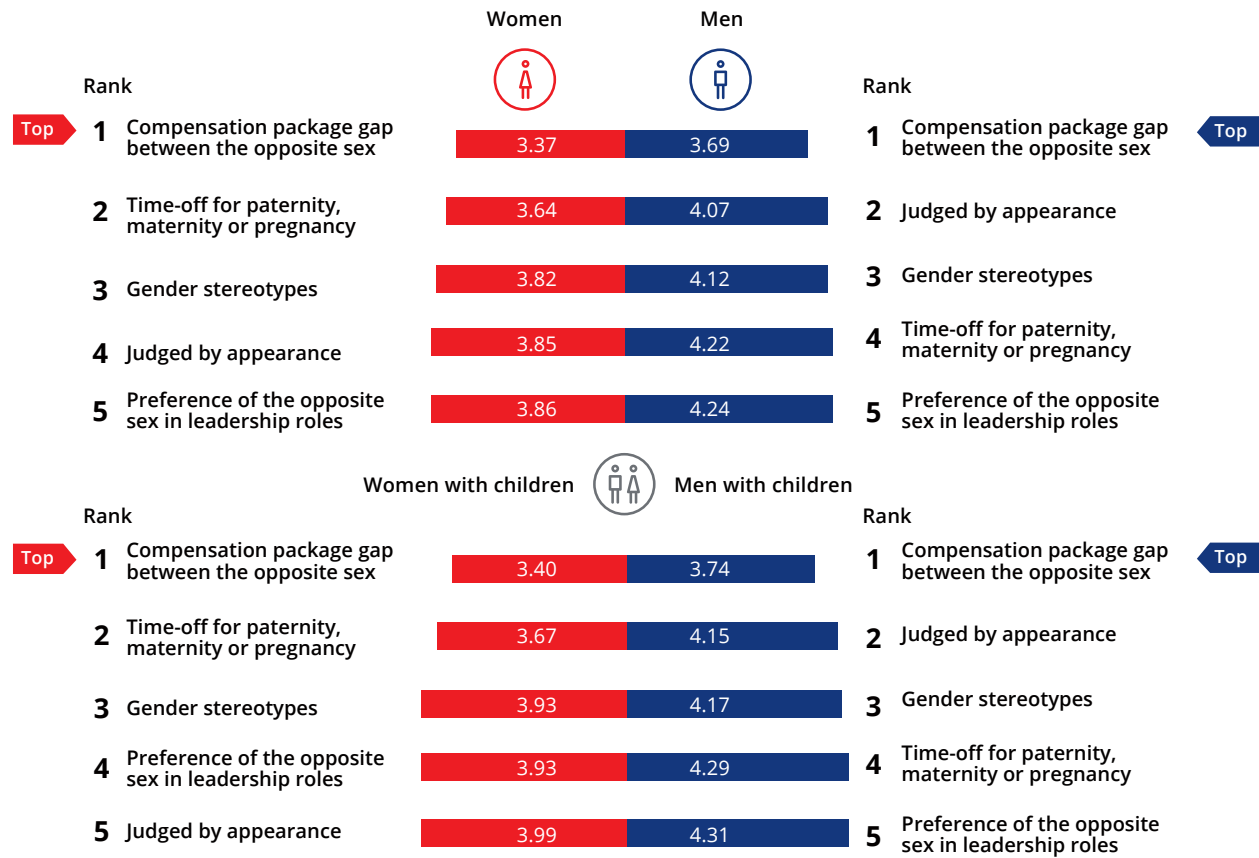## Professional challenges faced by women

Rank	State-owned enterprise	Private-owned enterprise	Multinational corporation
Top 1	3.19 — I lack a strong professional network	3.10 — I lack a work-life balance/I lack training and practice opportunities to build my core skills	3.16 — I lack promotion and advancement opportunities
2	3.22 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA):	3.16 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA):	3.24 — I lack a strong professional network
3	3.30 — I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.17 — I lack a strong professional network	3.25 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)

Professional challenges faced by women

	Born during **1970's**	Born during **1980's**	Born during **1990's**
Rank			
Top 1	3.11 — I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.15 — I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.08 — I lack a strong professional network
2	3.26 — I lack a work-life balance	3.20 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)	3.18 — I lack training and practice opportunities to
3	3.33 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)	3.21 — I lack a strong professional network	3.19 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)

	Individual contributor	Front-line supervisor	Senior level management
Rank			
Top 1	3.14 — I lack promotion and advancement opportunities	3.15 — I lack a work-life balance	2.98 — I lack a work-life balance
2	3.17 — I lack a strong professional network	3.27 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)	3.20 — I lack promotion and advancement opportunities
3	3.19 — I lack qualifications to progress my career (e.g. MBA, CFA)	3.28 — I lack training and practice opportunities to build my core skills	3.42 — I lack a strong professional network

As women become more senior, the lack of work–life balance becomes more prevalent. For senior women (VP level and above) and women at mid–level management, the lack of work–life balance (2.98; 3.15) was cited as the top challenge, and they were significantly more likely to cite this than men of the same organisational seniority. They were also more likely to cite lack of mentorship as being a key challenge than men of the same level. For women at state owned companies, the lack of networks was perceived to be the top challenge, while in privately owned companies, the top ranked challenge was the lack of work life balance, while in foreign owned companies, the lack of promotion and advancement opportunities was perceived to be the top challenge. This finding is aligned with the rapid speed of growth seen in privately owned companies, as well as a perceived sense of limitations on vertical progression at foreign owned companies given that their central headquarters are located overseas.

Policies to address gender equality in the workplace should not be addressed solely to women. It should be noted, while men and women value their families as much as their careers, the majority of corporate and social policies currently do not allow or encourage men the option of greater work life balance, such as taking longer paternal leave, working remotely or on a more flexible basis. On the other hand, the good news is that issues like the lack of networks, which women rank as their one of their top challenges, can be solved through actively encouraging women to join social networks outside of the workplace, attaining soft skills and the creation of internal networks and increasing women's access to them. However, given the evolving nature of the future of work, deeper thinking will need to be done by companies in terms of adapting roles at work to provide flexibility and advancement (both horizontally and vertically) that both men and women need throughout different stages of their career, in particular to adapt to their changed circumstances after having children–and this could include allowing for the creation of more flexible roles based on employing contingent, freelance and part–time talent.
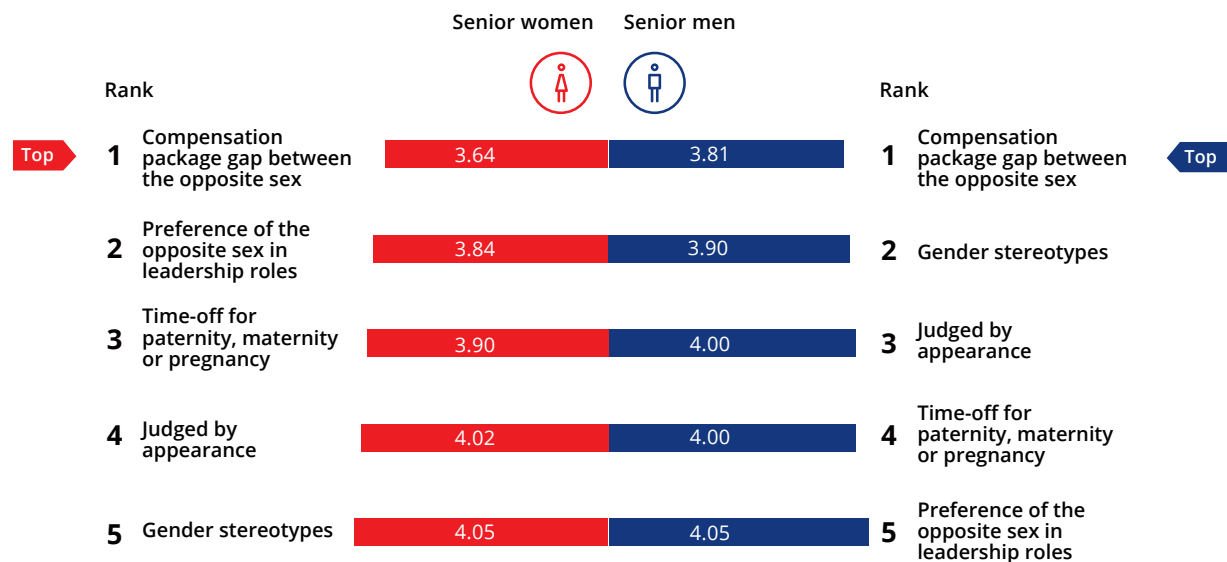
Challenges arising solely due to gender reasons

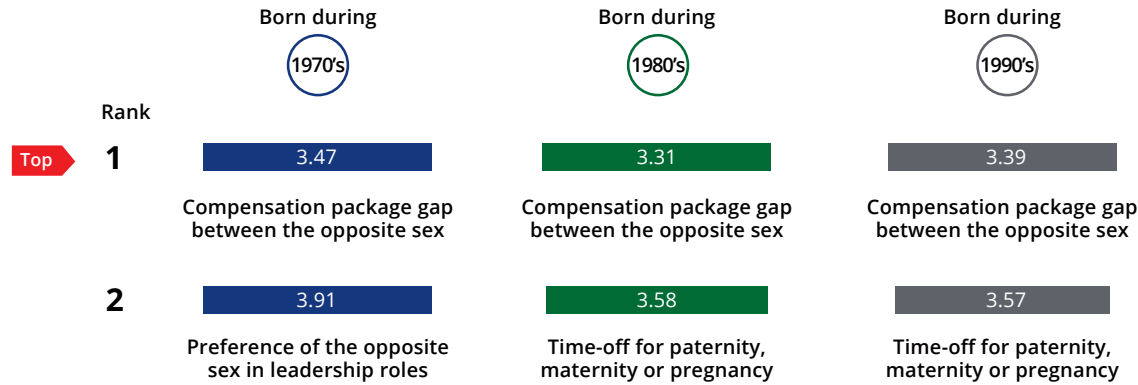## Top challenges solely due to gender reasons

	Women	Men

Rank		Women	Men		Rank
Top **1**	Compensation package gap between the opposite sex	3.37	3.69	**1**	Compensation package gap between the opposite sex **Top**
2	Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy	3.64	4.07	**2**	Judged by appearance
3	Gender stereotypes	3.82	4.12	**3**	Gender stereotypes
4	Judged by appearance	3.85	4.22	**4**	Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy
5	Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles	3.86	4.24	**5**	Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles

	Women with children	Men with children

Rank		Women with children	Men with children		Rank
Top **1**	Compensation package gap between the opposite sex	3.40	3.74	**1**	Compensation package gap between the opposite sex **Top**
2	Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy	3.67	4.15	**2**	Judged by appearance
3	Gender stereotypes	3.93	4.17	**3**	Gender stereotypes
4	Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles	3.93	4.29	**4**	Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy
5	Judged by appearance	3.99	4.31	**5**	Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles

Respondents were asked to rank challenges arising solely from gender reasons on a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning always and 5 meaning never. When analysing professional challenges arising solely from gender reasons, salary differences with the opposite sex and career disruption due to maternity or paternity are ranked as the top reasons by respondents in general. Women in general are much more likely to cite salary differences, career disruption due to maternity or paternity and gender stereotypes than men in general. However, we note that once married with children, women are slightly less likely to cite the aforementioned reasons, though the overall ranking of reasons remains the same. To address salary differences, organisations can look to set standards for similar pay for similar roles that reflect performance–related factors such as longer term performance track record, meeting KPI's and others targets.

Top challenges solely due to gender reasons

	Senior women	Senior men

Rank		Senior women	Senior men		Rank
Top **1**	Compensation package gap between the opposite sex	3.64	3.81	**1**	Compensation package gap between the opposite sex **Top**
2	Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles	3.84	3.90	**2**	Gender stereotypes
3	Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy	3.90	4.00	**3**	Judged by appearance
4	Judged by appearance	4.02	4.00	**4**	Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy
5	Gender stereotypes	4.05	4.05	**5**	Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles

Senior women (VP level and above) rank preference of men in senior roles as their second ranked challenge as opposed to career disruption due to maternity or paternity cited by women at lower levels of seniority. Women in senior level management are significantly more likely than men at the same level of seniority to state that this is an obstacle (even though with a score on 3.84 this on average this is not seen as a deep challenge).
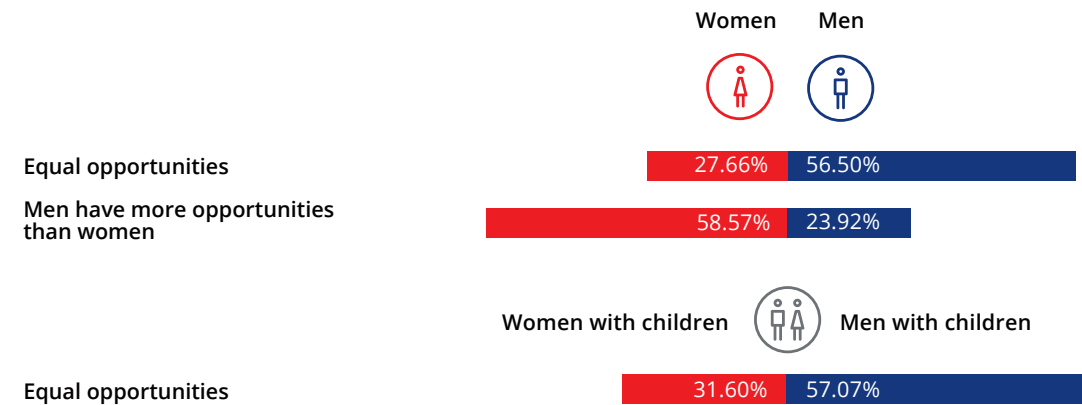
Top challenges solely due to gender reasons for women

	Born during 1970's	Born during 1980's	Born during 1990's
Rank			
Top 1	3.47 Compensation package gap between the opposite sex	3.31 Compensation package gap between the opposite sex	3.39 Compensation package gap between the opposite sex
2	3.91 Preference of the opposite sex in leadership roles	3.58 Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy	3.57 Time-off for paternity, maternity or pregnancy

Women born in the 70s were less likely to cite career disruption due to maternity or paternity than women born in the 80s and 90s (even though 40.98% of women respondents born in the 80s and 94.78% of women respondents born in the 90s do not have children). Previous research has suggested that younger generations of women are making assumptions on the extent of career disruption caused by having children even before they have reached that stage in their life[18]. The danger in this, is that young women, early in their career, may base their decisions in relation to work advancement on these assumptions, and choose to prematurely "lean back" (cutting back on career ambition) in the expectation of the time sacrifices required for having children later[19].

Perception of equal opportunity between the two genders

Perception of equal opportunity

	Women	Men
Equal opportunities	27.66%	56.50%
Men have more opportunities than women	58.57%	23.92%

	Women with children	Men with children
Equal opportunities	31.60%	57.07%

When respondents were asked whether there were equal opportunities between men and women–only 27.66% of women thought so, compared to 56.50% of men who thought so. Conversely, when respondents were asked if men have more opportunities than women, 58.57% of women thought so, compared to 23.92% of men who thought so. This shows that there is still a gap in perception of gender bias with women, given that they are more likely to be recipients of gender bias, appearing to be more aware of such bias. However, women with children (31.60%) were slightly more likely to think that men and women have equal opportunities than women in general (27.66%) corresponding to previous research that more gender bias is felt by women before having children[20] which may be due to social expectations towards child bearing and family responsibilities of women employees at a certain age.
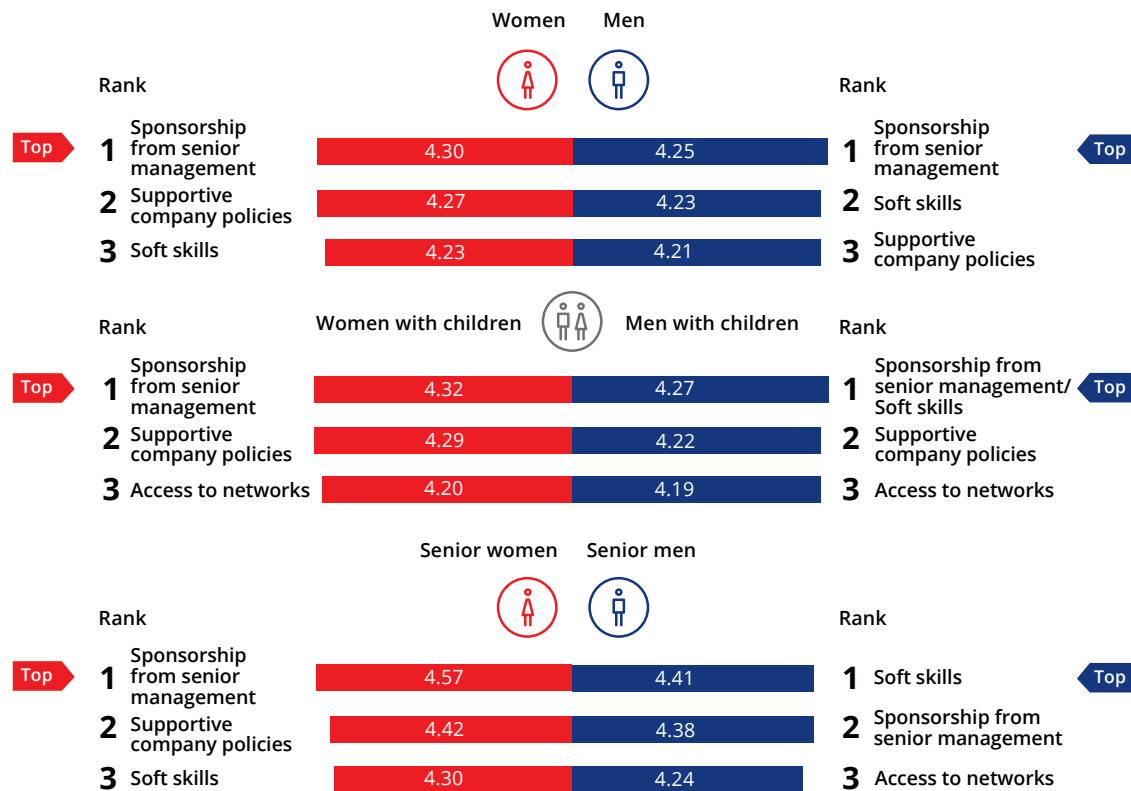
Top reasons for inequality of opportunity

	Women	Men
Society's preference in men as top or senior leaders	2.74	3.40
Social or corporate policies favour women over men to fulfill family commitments	2.85	3.46
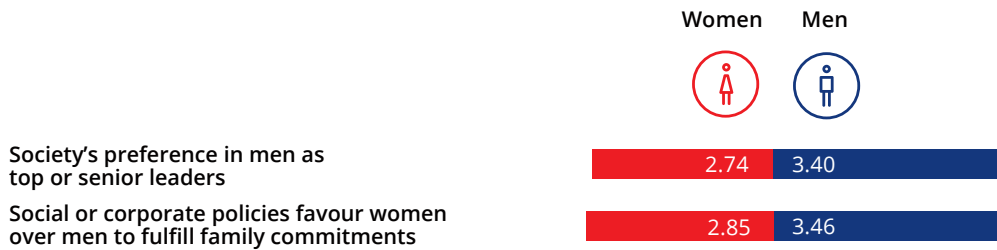
When asked for the reasons behind this perceived inequality, both male and female respondents cited society's preference for men to be top or senior leaders as the foremost reason and social and corporate policies that favour women over men to fulfil family commitments as the second reason. However while both men and women rank both of these reasons equally–women were more likely to cite these reasons than men. In particular, senior women are significantly more likely to cite these two reasons than women at lower level positions.

Support required

Support required in the workplace

Rank	Women	Men		Rank
Top 1	Sponsorship from senior management	4.30	4.25	1 Sponsorship from senior management Top
2	Supportive company policies	4.27	4.23	2 Soft skills
3	Soft skills	4.23	4.21	3 Supportive company policies

Rank	Women with children	Men with children		Rank
Top 1	Sponsorship from senior management	4.32	4.27	1 Sponsorship from senior management/ Soft skills Top
2	Supportive company policies	4.29	4.22	2 Supportive company policies
3	Access to networks	4.20	4.19	3 Access to networks

Rank	Senior women	Senior men		Rank
Top 1	Sponsorship from senior management	4.57	4.41	1 Soft skills Top
2	Supportive company policies	4.42	4.38	2 Sponsorship from senior management
3	Soft skills	4.30	4.24	3 Access to networks

Respondents were asked to rate the support they required on a ranking of 1–5 with 1 being not important and 5 being extremely important. Respondents in general both wanted sponsorship from senior management foremost and more supportive company policies, followed by acquisition of more soft skills and access to networks. Technical skills were ranked as the lowest priority for support–and women in general cited that they needed technical skills less than men, even after having children. After having children, both men and women were slightly more likely to want sponsorship from senior management (4.27; 4.32), though supportive company policies (4.29) and access to networks (4.20) were cited by women with children as their second and third ranked priorities for support, while men with children cited acquisition of soft skills (4.27) and supportive company policies as their second and third ranked priorities (4.22). Senior women were also significantly more likely to desire sponsorship from senior management (4.57) than men of the same seniority (4.38) but required less soft skills. As women age and get more senior, the need for sponsorship from senior management grows–women in the 70s and at senior management positions are more likely to desire sponsorship from senior management than women from earlier generations or of lower seniority.

Previous research has shown that sponsorship can accelerate career advancement, yet there is evidence that it is harder for women to gain the support of senior–level men[21].

As noted in the prior section above, there is still a perception of unequal opportunities in the workplace felt by a majority of women. Organisations can address this by implementing structured mentorship and sponsorship programmes for high potential women– allowing them greater access to senior management in their organisation as well as increasing transparency of expectations as a general policy for all employees–such as having a clear leadership model, which enables employees to have a clear understanding of what is required to move into a leadership role.

7. Leadership Capabilities and Personal Factors

As organisations in China increasingly look toward internationalization, there may be an increasing need for them to focus on bridging the gap between current leadership behaviours and what is expected from the future demands of the workplace. In particular, capabilities such as Building Talent, which is generally considered a pre–requisite of an organisation of the future, are often deprioritized when under pressure to grow business.

Using an established and validated leadership framework, we asked individuals to rate themselves on a number of factors to identify where strengths and development areas might exist. This was broken into leadership capabilities (which consist of skills, knowledge and experience) and personal factors (qualities that form the basis of overall potential of an individual). Results were then ranked by gender to understand the correlation between gender and leadership behaviours and the differences existed, if any, between groups.

Eight leadership capabilities ranked by strength

Rank	Women		Men	
1 (Top)	Collaboration		Collaboration	
2	Direction		Execution	
3	Execution		Direction	
4	Influence		Influence	
5	Inspirational Leadership		Business judgment	
6	Competitive edge		Competitive edge	
7	Business judgment		Inspirational Leadership	
8	Building Talent		Building Talent	

■ People Leadership ■ Relationship Leadership ■ Business Leadership ■ Entrepreneurial Leadership

Leadership Capabilities

Capabilities provide insight into how individuals approach work. Our model is comprised of eight different capabilities which our research has shown to make up effective leaders–Building Talent, Business Judgment, Collaboration, Competitive Edge, Direction, Execution, Influence and Inspirational Leadership. These eight capabilities are further segmented into four leadership domains: People, Relationship, Business and Entrepreneurial.

Eight leadership capabilities strengths
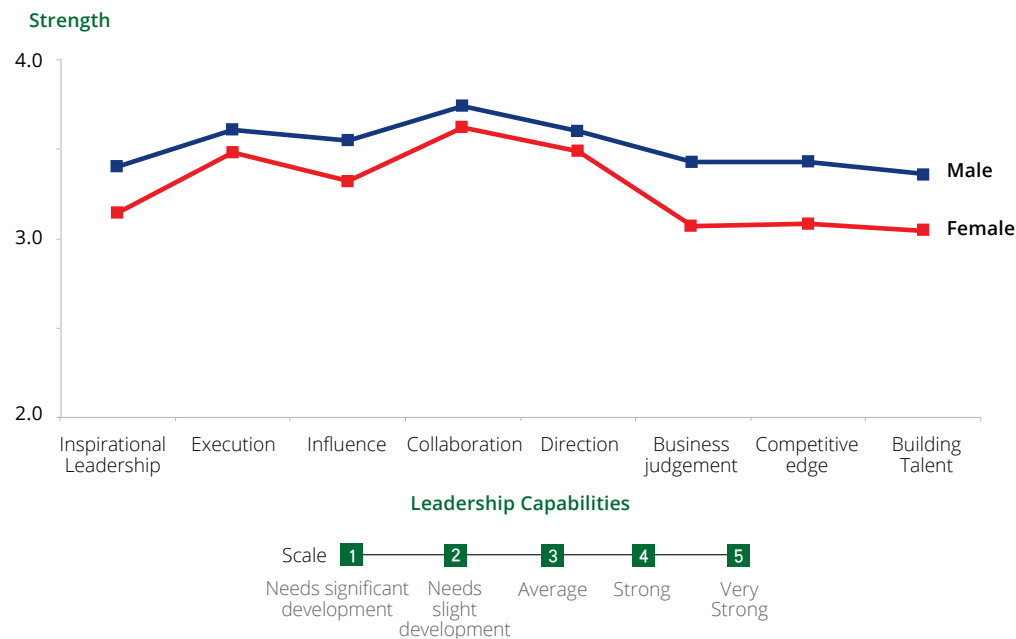
Consistent with previous research[22], men rated themselves slightly higher than women on all capabilities. This said, both men and women rated Collaboration (working in partnership), Direction (providing a clear direction) and Execution (achieving results through others) as their top capabilities. In contrast, capabilities related to Entrepreneurial Leadership which included Building Talent (building capability in others for competitive advantage) and Competitive Edge (driving change and innovation), were rated lowest for both men and women. This difference suggests capabilities to execute tasks are present, but those that can help drive innovation and change may need further development. In terms of order of ranking, women also ranked themselves higher on Inspirational Leadership (getting others to follow one's vision) (fifth ranked) and men ranked themselves higher on Business Judgment (making strong commercial decisions) (fifth ranked).

Top and bottom three capabilities respondents expect in leaders

	Women	Men
Top	Inspirational Leadership	Inspirational Leadership
	Influence	Direction
	Direction	Influence
Bottom	Collaboration	Business judgement
	Business judgement	Competitive edge
	Competitive edge	Building Talent

People Leadership   Relationship Leadership   Business Leadership   Entrepreneurial Leadership
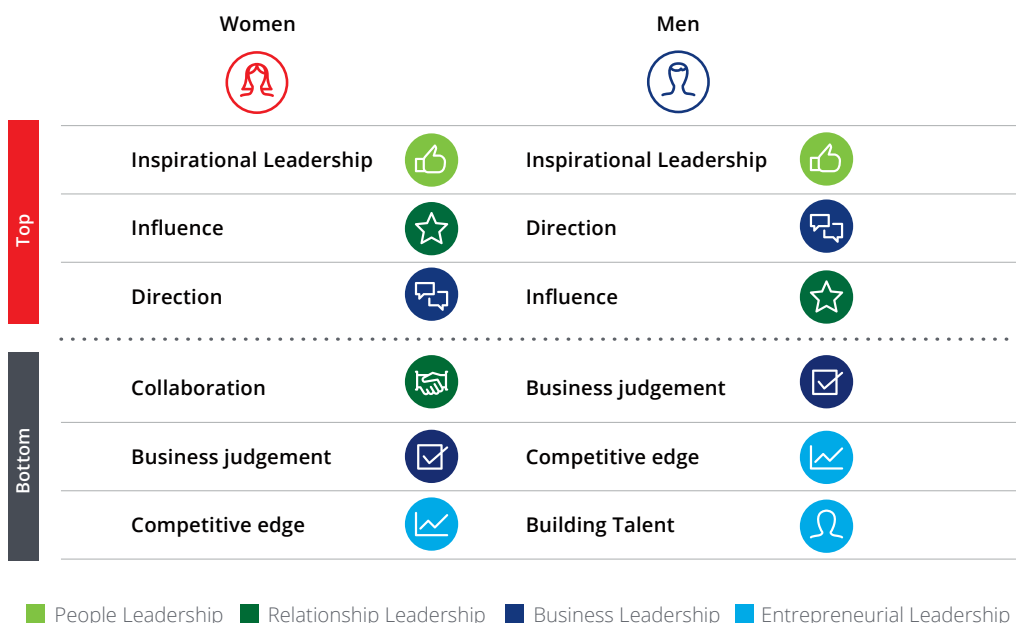
When asked what leadership capabilities they desire to see in their leaders, the respondents pointed to Inspirational Leadership (getting others to follow one's vision), Direction (providing a clear direction), and Influence (persuading and influencing stakeholders). Again, no capabilities related to Entrepreneurial Leadership were top ranked raising further questions around the significance of the role change and innovation play within organisations.

Personal Factors

Our model of Personal Factors, or the qualities, traits and motivations that a person has, is comprised of 12 factors which are placed into four potential categories. Each of the potential categories (Change, Intellectual, People, and Motivational) addresses a different domain which when combined, these factors provide insight into an individual's overall potential for leadership.

Women ranked themselves higher in Emotional Intelligence, Breadth of Perspective and Drive, while men ranked themselves higher in Experimenting and Self–Belief.

Personal factors ranked by strength

Rank	Women		Men	
1 (Top)	People regard	👍	People regard	👍
2	Emotional intelligence	♡	Self belief	☆
3	Breadth of perspective	🔭	Experimenting	✐
4	Resilience	🌱	Resilience	🌱
5	Drive	🤝	Breadth of perspective	🔭
6	Self belief	☆	Emotional intelligence	♡
7	Experimenting	✐	Drive	🤝
8	Conceptual thinking	≣	Conceptual thinking	≣
9	Social flexibility	💬	Social flexibility	💬
10	Decisiveness	☑	Decisiveness	☑
11	Challenging	◎	Challenging	◎
12	Risk taking	🚀	Risk taking	🚀

🟩 Change potential 🟢 Intellectual potential 🔵 People potential 🔷 Motivational potential

Results from the self–rating assessment suggest that both men and women rank themselves highest on People Regard (having optimism in the capability of others). Women also rated themselves second highest on Emotional Intelligence (attentiveness to others' feelings) whereas men rated themselves second highest on Self–Belief (confidence in taking the lead). This seems to be consistent with previous research[23] which highlights higher confidence in taking the lead for men. In terms of ranking, women ranked themselves higher on Breadth of perspective (ability to see different points of view) (third ranked) and Drive (willing to do what is necessary and sacrifices to progress) (fifth ranked) while men rated themselves higher in Experimenting (inclined to innovation and ideas) (third ranked).

Personal factor strengths

Self-report
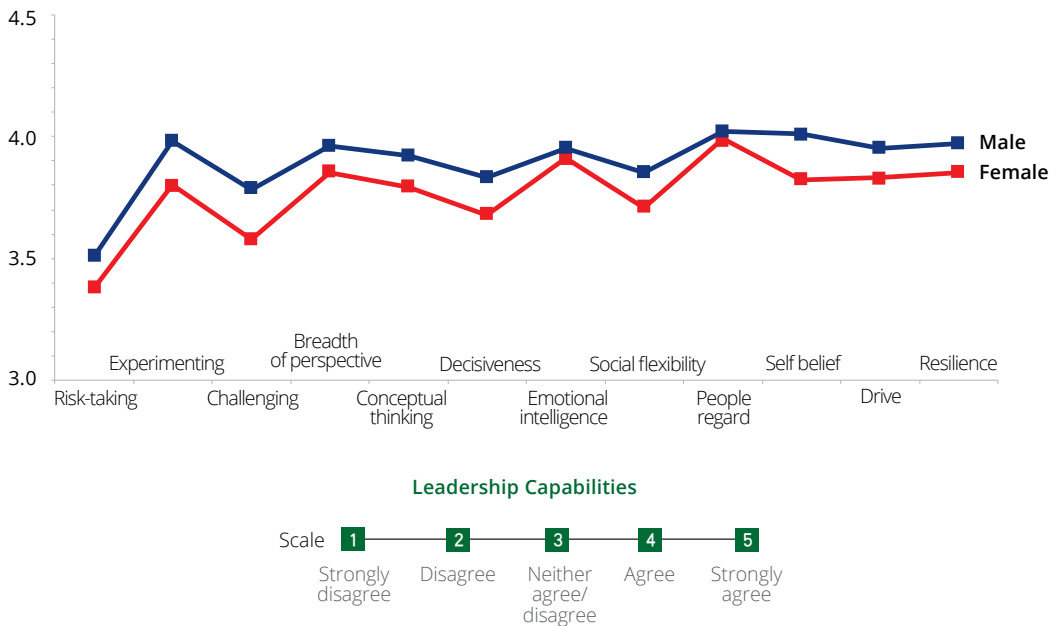
In contrast, both genders rated themselves lowest (by a large margin) in terms of Risk Taking (boldness in the face of ambiguity) and Challenging (fearlessness in speaking out). These factors are consistent with a lower rating in capabilities in respect of Entrepreneurial Leadership. As challenging others, being entrepreneurial and taking risks are consistent with the demands for the future of work, these gaps present critical opportunities for development and support from organisations.

8. Leadership and Digital Maturity and the Impact in the Workplace

Technologies such as robotics and cognitive automation, artificial intelligence, analytics and mobile are revolutionizing the way we communicate, live and work. Business productivity in particular has not kept up with the pace at which technologies are advancing. The ever–increasing gap between technological sophistication and economic output may appear to stem from various economic factors such as an income gap and wage stagnation. This is leading to a significant demand for technological adaptations, without which organisations with low productivity will soon be outcompeted by other market players. The lack of human capital strategy often appears to be the root cause for driving the widening of this gap. While individuals are quick to adapt to the new innovations, businesses are moving at a relatively slower pace.

To enable the future workforce to leverage emerging technologies to their fullest potential, it requires two conditions: (1) having the technical innovation and (2) applying a new digital mind–set. While acquiring the latest technological tools and platforms is part of being a digital organisation, creating and growing a digital mind–set involving collaboration, agility, nimbleness, risk–taking, challenging and inclusivity, should not be neglected.

The more an organisation's culture supports risk–taking and inclusion, the greater the financial and non–financial impact.

From the survey results, correlations show that an organisation's maturity helps both men and women have higher self–perceived impact in the workplace from both a non–financial and financial perspective. Specifically, the definition of organisational

maturity consists of leadership and digital maturity–leadership maturity refers to 5 factors–leadership development, culture, leadership model, leadership pipeline, organization structure and digital maturity refers to 2 factors–business model and infrastructure and organization design. Out of all of the above factors, an organisational culture that promotes risk–taking and inclusion is most related to increasing financial and non–financial impact for both men and women in the workplace. Financial impact is defined as being able to achieve economic outcomes such as revenue or customer related targets and non–financial impact is defined as the discretionary effort which individuals choose to put in to improve their organisation (which is beyond their job scope).

Financial and non–financial impact

Financial impact
Immediate business outcomes in financial terms

Non–financial impact
Business outcomes in non-financial terms, often realized in the longer run

We asked individuals to rate using a five–point scale the extent to which their organisations allow and/ or encourage them to take risks, as well as the extent their organisations have an inclusive culture that encourages the development of leadership potential in general. The survey results suggest that when both factors, risk–taking and inclusion, are combined, the findings shows a stronger relationship with greater non–financial and financial impact than when viewing the factors separately. There is also greater non–financial impact than financial impact for both men and women when the organisation is more inclined towards risk–taking and inclusion.

A further breakdown to analyse and compare the relationship between organisational culture and impact in the workplace for women and men reveals that:

Women are slightly more likely than men to have greater financial impact when organisations have a culture of risk–taking and inclusion. In contrast, men in general would have greater non–financial impact.

What is even more notable is that when we further divide each gender into their respective self–rated potential into three groups: high, medium and low, the group with low potential is identified with the highest correlation between organisational culture and impact among the three. This suggests that acknowledging and encouraging this type of organisational culture is especially relevant to individuals who view themselves as having low potential. By creating a sense of inclusion in a community with psychological safety, individuals across the organisation can stay connected and keep up with the pace of the organisation as it continues to develop in an increasingly digital environment.

Another explanation of the overall correlation is that the open, collaborative and shared nature of a risk–taking and inclusive culture is particularly relevant in a work environment which is increasingly digitalized, globalized and where barriers between different industries are now gradually being broken down. As the modern workplace continues to be shaped by the diversity of markets, customers, ideas and talent[24], having a culture that encourages risk–taking and inclusion, allows organisations to tap into the diversity of thoughts, encouraging greater agility and internal cross–functionality, and gain understanding of customers and the markets that the organisations choose to compete in.

In terms of business performance, Deloitte's previous research[25] reveals that by having an inclusive culture, organisations are two times more likely to meet or exceed financial targets, three times as likely to be high performing, six times more likely to be innovative and agile and eight times more likely to achieve better business outcomes. In terms of team performance, with inclusive leadership, we see an increase of 17% in team performance, 20% in decision–making quality and 29% in team collaboration.

Being able to draw upon a diverse set of thinking also creates greater engagement and trust of employees, facilities more effective decision–making and improves internal efficiencies[26]. The power lies within the inclusion of everyone, which then creates a sense of being relevant and valued, and sharing part of a common goal. At its highest point, inclusion is expressed as being able to express one' s ideas and points of views and being empowered to release one's fullest potential. The powerful truth is, optimal diversity of thinking cannot be achieved without a level playing field for all talent, which often requires acknowledging the particular challenges of different groups such as men and women. To unlock the potential of the entire talent pool, we will need to first factor in what we know about the effects of diversity on both financial and non–financial impact in the workplace.

There is a stronger relationship between a mature leadership model and pipeline and greater financial impact for women; there is a stronger relationship between the maturity of leadership development and greater non–financial impact for men.

Correlation–Leadership Maturity

Female Impact	Leadership Maturity				
	Leadership Development	Culture	Leadership Model	Leadership Pipeline	Org Structure
Financial Impact		●	●	●	
Non-Financial Impact	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	●

● Significance of association

Note: Illustration is not in an absolute scale

Male Impact	Leadership Maturity				
	Leadership Development	Culture	Leadership Model	Leadership Pipeline	Org Structure
Financial Impact	●	●	●		
Non-Financial Impact	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●

● Significance of association

Note: Illustration is not in an absolute scale

Further to the correlation between organisation culture and an individual's impact in the workplace, the survey results also show correlation between other aspects of the leadership maturity of an organisation and the impact created by women and men in the workplace. From the survey results, other than organisation culture, three factors such as leadership model (having a clear structure and well–defined expectations for leadership progression), leadership pipeline (having a structured succession management process which identifies future leaders) and leadership development (programs to develop leadership capability) are also correlated to promoting the financial and non–financial impact of individuals. Specifically, when an organisation is more mature in its leadership model and pipeline, women will be more likely to exert greater financial impact than their male counterparts. Meanwhile, when an organisation is more mature in its leadership development, men will be more likely to have both greater financial and non–financial impact than their female counterparts do. This correlation can be attributed to the specific professional challenges faced by women and men in the workplace. From the survey results, women are more likely to be affected by the lack of promotion opportunities in workplace. 45.10%of female respondents reported that lack of promotion and advancement opportunities had at least moderately imposed negative impact on their professional experience, as compared to only 29.60% of male respondents who reported so. Hence,

A more mature leadership model or pipeline with more clearly defined expectations at leadership positions, better communication with employees regarding their leadership potential and stronger succession planning will empower women to create a greater impact in the workplace.

Correlation–Digital Maturity

Female Impact	Digital Maturity	
	Business Model & Infr	Org Design
Financial Impact		
Non-Financial Impact	● ●	● ●

● Significance of association

Note: Illustration is not in an absolute scale

The greater the digital maturity of an organisation, the more likely that women will invest into their organisation.

Correlations show that higher digital maturity in an organisation is linked to greater non–financial impact for women in the workplace. One explanation might come from an example shared by one of the senior female executives who attended a focus group workshop for this report: "Technology has allowed me to strike a balance between my personal and work life. With technology, I can check in with my son's teacher in between my work, schedule meetings with my staff while I am on the road… Overall it allows me to stay in touch with my life, both in and out of work."

Working anytime and anywhere has become a staple of today's modern business environment, and remote working options can help women to avoid career gaps, particularly during and after maternity leave.[27] Ctrip, China's largest online travel agency, where women make up more than 60% of the workforce, previously set out a large scale experiment[28] over nine months, with oversight from academic economists at Stanford and Beijing University, to showcase the benefits of flexible working which included remote working. The study involved 255 employees who were selected to participate in the experiment based on a set of predetermined criteria for their home work space and company tenure. Half stayed in the office as a control group, while the other half worked from home four out of five days a week, on the same shifts as their in–office counterparts.

Results were overwhelmingly positive:

• Performance of home workers were up 13% over nine months, primarily because they took fewer breaks and sick days, but also because they took more calls per minute worked.

• Attrition fell by 50% among the home workers versus the control group that stayed in the office.

• Ctrip estimated that it would save $2,000 a year per employee working at home and, at the end of the experiment, offered all of its employees that option.

• Half those who had worked at home decided to work from home; one third of those who had stayed in the office opted to work from home.

To thrive in a digital world requires a digital mind–set. Besides the business performance and cost reduction benefits of using digital tools, platforms and practices, which enriches both work and non–work lives, we wanted to emphasize the importance of applying a digital mind–set within organisations in order to fully realize these benefits by cultivating a culture of risk–taking and inclusivity. As organisations become more team–centric, a defined collaboration structure for generating, sharing and executing innovative ideas needs to be in place to empower individuals, as well as to be able to leverage the thinking of diverse groups in an increasingly digital world.

9. Call for Actions

Research has increasingly shown that companies which are gender diverse and effectively engage female talent are 45% more likely to report improved market share and 70% more likely to report capturing new markets.[29]

The ongoing debate about diversity is not just about ethics, but also business–as a way to maximize the current talent pool, as well as to positively impact the bottom line. Gender diversity continues to represent a challenge to organisations, however it can also be seen as a significant opportunity for the future of work.
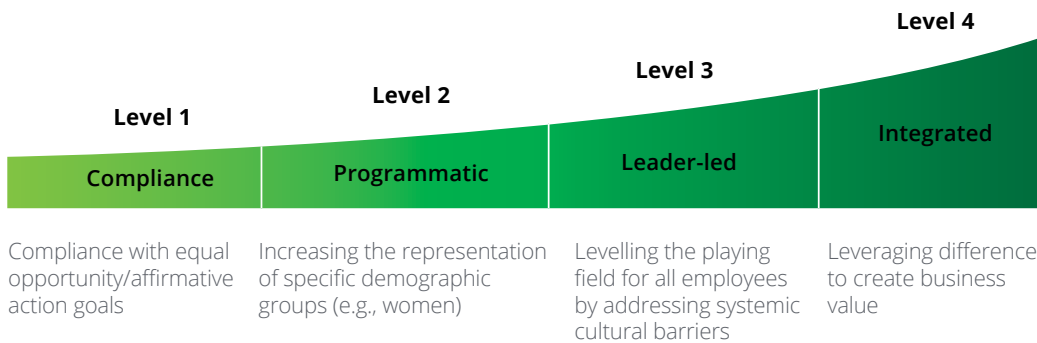
Many actions have been suggested throughout this report on what can be done to better support the female workforce in China based on our current study. Due to the large proportion of women within the workforce, organisations interested in making the shift to unlock the potential of their female workforce will be at a competitive advantage. There are common actions[30] that organisations can take in terms of longer term solutions to support women in the workplace, including flexible working, introduction of technology to balance a range of tasks in and out of work, mentoring and sponsorship programmes, or creating a culture where innovation and taking more risks are encouraged.

Leader–led Changes

Traditional Chinese leadership places a strong focus on improving employees through personal development, and a key element of Chinese leadership principles include assuming the role of inspirational character, leading by example in terms of promoting equality, simple living and harmony among others.[31]

In order to obtain the full benefit of any solutions implemented, focus should be on a leader–led approach which can help shift company culture to a shared purpose of diversity of thinking and inclusion of others essential for the digital age. Putting effort into creating an environment where different ideas and points of view are encouraged and incorporated into how work is done creates greater opportunity for all but will particularly benefit the female workforce.

Deloitte diversity and inclusion maturity model

Level 1

Compliance

Compliance with equal opportunity/affirmative action goals

Level 2

Programmatic

...ng the representation ...mographic ...

Level 3

Leader-led

Levelling the playing field for all employees by addressing systemic cultural barriers

Level 4

Integrated

Leveraging difference to create business value

Encourage inclusive behaviours

Building inclusive behaviours[32] within senior and middle managers will help them to identify any subconscious bias (for example, the concept of pre–emptive maternal bias as set out earlier), be more open–minded and better understand the differences amongst their workforce. This will not only help when operating domestically but also when moving to an international stage where cross–cultural situations will be common place.

The six signature traits of inclusive leadership

Cognizance

Because bias is a leader's Achilles' heel

Curiosity

Because different ideas and experiences enable growth

Courage

Because talking about imperfections involves personal risk-taking

The six signature traits

Cultural intelligence

Because not everyone sees the world through the same cultural frame

Commitment

Because staying the course is hard

Collaboration

Because a diverse-thinking team is greater than the sum of its parts

Implement processes and practices

Behaviour change can be supported by systems which encourage and reward change. To ensure women are supported in the workplace, specific goals could be set and made part of individual performance indicators for leaders and staff, such as time spent on mentoring and sponsorship. As leaders often model what is seen as desired practice, they can reinforce practices by taking advantage of them as well. Use of policies such as remote working, parental leave and flexible time should be encouraged for both men and women. More importantly, these practices should also be demonstrated by leaders to make employees fully engaged.

Structured programs on mentorship and having access to senior sponsorship for identified high potential women, as opposed to ad–hoc events, are also highly encouraged as part of firm wide career development programs, and should be clearly communicated to all employees, as they are a great way of increasing employee loyalty and engagement. Didi, China's ridesharing giant, whose female employees constitute almost 40% of their workforce, has recently unveiled a womens leadership program to help high potential female employees enhance their leadership and influence as well as a policy encouraging all expectant and current mothers to work from home for one day every week.

Create a digital workspace[33]

Technology can support different working styles allowing employees to approach work in a way that is more reflective of their preferred style. It can build greater transparency, improve efficiency and strengthen networks which can be leveraged in and out of the office in real time, increasing overall labour productivity. The usage of digital tools (such as remote working access and video conferencing) and being able to stay connected to wider teams that are spread out can be particularly helpful for women leaders in managing demands both inside and outside of the workplace. Larger technical advances such as cognitive computing and AI can lighten administrative burden so work will be targeted on more value added activities.

In addition, including channels for new learning that are on demand, targeted and accessible outside of the workplace can help to overcome the perceived lack of training and development opportunities–which is often cited by women as one of their top ongoing professional challenges. Research has shown that digital fluency, the extent to which people embrace and use digital technologies to become more knowledgeable, connected and effective, is helping to close the gender gap and level the playing field for women at work.[34]

Look outside the organisation

Leaders and individuals can benefit from thinking about diverse markets and customers. Given the rise of the 'She Economy' in China, which is estimated to be worth US$4 trillion in 2020[35], women as end users and consumers are increasingly driving growth of companies[36], regardless of whether they are female–orientated or not, especially in the internet, mobile and social media industries–industries of the future. Companies can ensure they remain competitive by taking into account consumer preferences and needs when considering product design and marketing, and these should also be increasingly reflected in the nature of the workforce that they employ. When seeking to broaden their views within the organisation, they can look to different backgrounds for their talent. Companies looking to innovate often look outside their industry for leaders who can bring fresh perspective. Similarly, companies can draw upon talent with non–traditional careers where skills are transferable. Women, as a pool of talent, are likely to benefit from this approach.

Diversity of talent	Diversity of ideas	Diversity of market	Diversity of customers
Shifts in age profiles, education, and migration flows, along with expectations of eqaulity of opportunity and work/life balance, are all impacting employee populations, with workforce diversity an increasing reality.	Against a backdrop of uncertainty, complexity and change, diversity of thinking is gaining prominence as a strategy to protect against groupthink and generate breakthrough insights.	Demand is shifting to emerging markets. With their growing middle class, these new markets represent teh single biggest growth opportunity in teh portfolio of many companies around the world.	Customer demographics and attitudes are changing. Empowered through technology and with greater choice, an increasingly diverse customer base expects better personalisation of products and services.

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WOMEN, WORK AND HAPPINESS
女性、职业与幸福感

About Lean In China

Lean In China is a professional development and peer support platform for women. Lean In China promotes a culture of mutual support, mentorship and leadership for women through building active communities, education, the use of data and research, and building strategic partnership. (Lean In China is not legally affiliated with, and is operationally and financially independent from leanin.org and the Sheryl Sandberg and Dave Goldberg Family Foundation. The views and works of Lean In China do not represent that of leanin.org or the Sheryl Sandberg and Dave Goldberg Family Foundation.)

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